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CHILDREN'S CLASSICS IN DRAMATIC FORM

A Reader for the Fourth Grade

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(Page 75)

"THE MOON CHANGES INTO THE RED BEARD OF THE OLD SOLDIER"

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS IN DRAMATIC FORM

A READER FOR THE FOURTH GRADE

BY

AUGUSTA STEVENSON

FORMERLY A TEACHER IN THE INDIANAPOLIS PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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FOREWORD

THIS book is intended to accomplish three distinct purposes: first, to arouse a greater interest in oral reading; second, to develop an expressive voice — sadly lacking in the case of most Americans; and third, to give freedom and grace in the bodily attitudes and movements which are involved in reading and speaking. The stories given are for the most part adaptations of favorite tales from folklore, — Andersen, Grimm, Æsop, and the Arabian Nights having been freely drawn upon.

Children are dramatic by nature. They *are* for the time the kings, the fairies, and the heroes that they picture in their imaginations. They *are* these characters with such abandon and with such intense pleasure that the on-looker must believe that nature intended that they should give play to this dramatic instinct, not so much formally, with all the trappings of the man-made stage, but spontaneously and naturally, as they talk and read. If this expressive instinct can be

utilized in the teaching of reading, we shall be able both to add greatly to the child's enjoyment and to improve the quality of his oral reading. In these days when so many books are hastily read in school, there is a tendency to sacrifice expression to the mechanics and interpretation of reading. Those acquainted with school work know too well the resulting monotonous, indistinct speech and the self-conscious, listless attitude which characterize so much of the reading of pupils in grades above the third. It is believed that this little book will aid in overcoming these serious faults in reading, which all teachers and parents deplore. The dramatic appeal of the stories will cause the child to lose himself in the character he is impersonating and read with a naturalness and expressiveness unknown to him before, and this improvement will be evident in all his oral reading, and even in his speech.

The use of the book permits the whole range of expression, from merely reading the stories effectively, to "acting them out" with as little, or as much, stage-setting or costuming as a parent or teacher may desire. The stories are especially

designed to be read as a part of the regular reading work. Many different plans for using the book will suggest themselves to the teacher. After a preliminary reading of a story during the study period, the teacher may assign different parts to various children, she herself reading the stage directions and the other brief descriptions inclosed in brackets. The italicized explanations in parentheses are not intended to be read aloud; they will aid in giving the child the cue as to the way the part should be rendered. After the story has been read in this way, if thought advisable it can be played informally and simply, with no attempt at costuming or theatric effects. It will often add to the interest of the play to have some of the children represent certain of the inanimate objects of the scene, as the forest, the town gate, a door, etc. Occasionally, for the "open day," or as a special exercise, a favorite play may be given by the children with the simplest kind of costuming and stage-setting. These can well be made in the school as a part of the manual training and sewing work. In giving the play, it will generally be better not to have pupils memorize

the exact words of the book, but to depend upon the impromptu rendering of their parts. This method will contribute more largely to the training in English.

The best results will usually be obtained by using these stories in the fourth grade. In some schools, however, the stories in the first part of the book may profitably be used in the third grade.

The author has been led to believe from her own experience and from her conversation with many other teachers that there is a pronounced call for this kind of book. She therefore hopes that in the preparation of this book she may have been of service to the teachers and children who may be led to use it.

A. S.

CONTENTS

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE HATCHET 1
Adapted from Æsop's Fable, The Travellers and the Hatchet.

THE OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON 3
Adapted from Grimm's The Old Man and his Grandson.

THE CROW AND THE FOX 6
Suggested by Æsop's Fable, The Crow and the Fox.

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THEIR DONKEY . . 9
Suggested by Æsop's Fable, The Miller, his Son, and their Ass.

EACH IN HIS OWN PLACE 14
Suggested by Grimm's The Mouse, the Bird, and the Sausage.

WHAT THE GOODMAN DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT . . 20
Adapted from Hans Andersen's What the Goodman does is always Right.

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE 29
Suggested by Grimm's The Cat and the Mouse.

THE GIRL WHO TROD ON THE LOAF 36
Suggested by Hans Andersen's The Girl who trod on the Loaf.

THE UGLY DUCKLING 48
Suggested by Hans Andersen's The Ugly Duckling.

THE RED SHOES 62
Suggested by Hans Andersen's The Red Shoes.

THE STORY OF ALI COGIA 78
Adapted from The Story of Ali Cogia from The Arabian Nights' Entertainments.

THE WILD SWANS 90
Suggested by Hans Andersen's The Wild Swans.

THE TWO COUNTRYMEN 109
Suggested by an oriental legend; source unknown.

THE MAN AND THE ALLIGATOR 121
From a folk-tale of Spanish Honduras.

THE SONG IN THE HEART 135
Suggested by Grimm's The Three Spinners.

THE EMPEROR'S TEST 149

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS 163

ILLUSTRATIONS

THE MOON CHANGES INTO THE RED BEARD OF THE OLD SOLDIER. (See page 75) . . . . *Frontispiece*
THE TRAVELLERS AND THE HATCHET 2
"WE HAVE LOST OUR DONKEY" 13
WHAT THE GOODMAN DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT . 24
THE CAT AND THE MOUSE 31
"'T IS SINKING! WHAT SHALL I DO?" 41
THE UGLY DUCKLING 52
"A THOUSAND PIECES AT LEAST" 81
THE TWO COUNTRYMEN 113
"HELP! HELP!" 131
THE PRINCE SEES THE THREE GREAT-AUNTS . . 147

CHILDREN'S CLASSICS IN DRAMATIC FORM

THE TRAVELLERS AND THE HATCHET

TIME: *last week.*

PLACE: *a high road.*

FIRST TRAVELLER.

SECOND TRAVELLER.

THE CARPENTER.

[*The* TWO TRAVELLERS *journey along the road. A hatchet lies in the dust at one side.*]*

FIRST TRAVELLER (*seeing the hatchet, taking it up*).† Ah, see what I have found!

SECOND TRAVELLER. Do not say *I*, but rather, what *we* have found.

FIRST TRAVELLER. Nonsense! Did I not see the hatchet first? And did I not take it up?

SECOND TRAVELLER. Well, then, claim the hatchet, since that is plainly your wish.

* The explanations in *brackets* may be read by the teacher.

† The words in *parentheses* are not intended to be read aloud; they will give the child the cue as to how the part should be rendered.

[*Enter the* CARPENTER.]

CARPENTER (*to First Traveller*). Aha, thief! Now I have caught you!

[*He seizes the First Traveller.*]

FIRST TRAVELLER. No thief am I, sir!

CARPENTER. But my own hatchet is in your hand, sir. Come along to the judge, sir!

FIRST TRAVELLER (*to Second Traveller*). Alas, we are undone!

SECOND TRAVELLER. Do not say *we*. You are undone, not I. You would not allow me to share the prize; you cannot expect me to share the danger. I bid you good day, sir.

THE OLD MAN AND HIS GRANDSON

TIME: *now.*

PLACE: *a certain* MAN'S *house.*

THE MAN.

HIS WIFE.

THEIR SON — LITTLE HANS.

THE GRANDFATHER.

[*The* MAN, *his* WIFE, *little* HANS, *and the* GRANDFATHER *sit at the table eating the noon meal.*]

MAN. Be careful, father! You are spilling the soup on your coat.

GRANDFATHER (*trying to steady his trembling hand*). Yes, yes, I'll be careful.

[*Short pause.*]

WIFE (*sharply*). Grandfather! You have spilled the soup on my clean tablecloth!

GRANDFATHER (*embarrassed*). Dear me! Dear me!

[*Short pause.*]

MAN. Here, father, is your plate of meat.

[*The old man takes the plate, but lets it fall.*]

WIFE (*angrily*). There now! Just see what you have done!

GRANDFATHER. My hand shook so — I'm sorry — so sorry!

WIFE. That won't mend the plate!

MAN. Nor buy a new one!

WIFE (*to her husband*). He should eat from wooden dishes.

MAN (*nodding, pointing to a wooden dish*). Let him have that one for his meat.

[*The Grandfather sighs sadly. The Wife gets a wooden dish and fills it with meat. Little Hans leaves the table and plays with his blocks on the floor.*]

WIFE (*handing the wooden dish to the Grandfather*). Here's one you can't break. Go now and sit in the corner behind the oven. You shall eat there hereafter. I cannot have my tablecloths soiled — that I cannot!

[*The Grandfather takes his wooden plate and goes to the seat in the corner behind the oven. His eyes are filled with tears.*]

MAN. Come, little Hans, and finish your dinner.

WIFE (*turning to Hans*). Bless me! What are you making, child?

HANS. A wooden trough for you and father to eat out of when I grow big.

[*The Man and his Wife look at each other; there is a pause.*]

MAN (*showing shame*). He will treat us as we have treated father!

WIFE (*weeping*). 'T will serve us right!

MAN (*kindly*). Father, throw that wooden dish out of the window. I am ashamed of what I have done; forgive me!

WIFE (*kindly*). Father, come back to the table. I too am ashamed. Forgive me, dear father.

THE CROW AND THE FOX

TIME: *yesterday noon.*
PLACE: *a high tree in a grove.*

MADAM CROW.
MISS CROW, *her Daughter.*
MASTER FOX.

[MADAM CROW *sits in the tree. Enter* MISS CROW. *She carries a large piece of cheese in her mouth.*]

MADAM. O joy! O joy! Come, dear daughter, come! We'll dine as if we were queen and princess!

[*Miss Crow flies to Madam Crow. Enter* MASTER FOX.]

FOX. I bid you good morning, dear madam.

MADAM. Good morning to you, dear sir.

FOX (*sitting under tree*). With your permission, I'll speak with your daughter.

MADAM. She'll be pleased to listen, that she will — you are so clever.

Fox (*modestly*). Nay, madam, not so clever, only thoughtful.

[*He sighs deeply twice.*]

Madam. You have something on your mind.

Fox (*sighing*). Yes, dear madam, — I am thinking of your daughter.

Madam. Then speak! Speak now, sir! — at once, sir!

Fox. I speak. O sweet Miss Crow, how beautiful your wings are!

Madam (*pleased*). Do you hear that, daughter?

[*Miss Crow nods, spreading her wings proudly.*]

Fox. I speak again. How bright your eye, dear maid! How graceful your neck!

Madam. Bend your neck, child! Now bend it well that he may better see your grace.

[*Miss Crow bends neck twice.*]

Fox. But oh, that such a sweet bird should be dumb! — should be so utterly dumb!

[*He weeps gently in his little pocket handkerchief.*]

Madam (*indignantly*). Do you think, sir, she cannot *caw* as well as the rest of us?

Fox. I must think so, dear madam. Alas!

[*Weeping again in his little pocket handkerchief.*]

MADAM. You shall think so, then, no longer! Caw, child, caw, as you have never cawed before!

MISS CROW (*opening mouth; dropping cheese*). Caw! Caw!

[*Fox quickly snaps up the cheese.*]

FOX (*going*). Thank you, Miss Crow. Remember, dear madam, that whatever I said of her beauty, I said nothing of her brains.

[*He goes, waving the crows a farewell with his little pocket handkerchief.*]

THE MILLER, HIS SON, AND THEIR DONKEY

TIME: *this morning.*

PLACE: *a bridge, near a town and not far from a Fair.*

THE MILLER AND HIS SON.

FIRST MAID.	FIRST GOODY.
SECOND MAID.	SECOND GOODY.
THIRD MAID.	THIRD GOODY.
FIRST OLD MAN.	THE MAYOR.
SECOND OLD MAN.	HIS FIRST CLERK.
THIRD OLD MAN.	HIS SECOND CLERK.

[*The* MILLER *and his* SON *are driving their donkey across the bridge. They go to the Fair.*]

SON. Do you expect to get a good price for our donkey, father?

MILLER (*nodding*). Aye, lad; the Fair is the place to take your wares.

SON. Our donkey is not so young, though.

MILLER. Neither is he so old, though.

SON. But he is not so fat, though.

MILLER. Neither is he so lean, though.

SON. Truly he might be worse.

MILLER. Better or worse, he must be sold.

[THREE MAIDS *enter the bridge. They go to the Fair.*]

FIRST MAID (*pointing to the Miller and his Son*). Look there! Did you ever see such geese?

SECOND MAID. As I live! — walking when they might ride!

THIRD MAID (*to the Miller*). You'll get a laugh at the Fair, old man!

[*The Maids pass on.*]

MILLER. This may be true. Get you upon the beast, lad.

[*The boy mounts the donkey. Enter* THREE OLD MEN. *They talk together earnestly. They go to the Fair.*]

FIRST OLD MAN (*pointing to the Miller and his Son*). Look you there! That proves what I was saying.

SECOND OLD MAN (*nodding*). Aye! There's no respect shown old age in these days.

THIRD OLD MAN (*nodding*). Aye! There's that young rogue riding while his old father has to walk!

[*The Old Men pass on.*]

MILLER. Get down, lad. 'T would indeed look better should I ride.

[*The lad dismounts; the Miller mounts. Enter* THREE GOODIES; *they go to the Fair.*]

FIRST GOODY (*indignantly, pointing to the Miller and his Son*). Look, Goodies, look! Did you ever see anything so cruel?

SECOND GOODY (*to the Miller*). You lazy old fellow! How can you ride while your own child walks in the dust?

THIRD GOODY (*to the lad*). You poor, poor child!

[*The Goodies pass on, shaking their heads and their canes indignantly.*]

MILLER. Come, lad, get up behind me.

SON. Why, father, I'm not tired!

MILLER. I know, but we must try to please them. Come.

[*The lad mounts, sitting behind his father. Enter the* MAYOR *and his* CLERKS. *They go to the Fair.*]

MAYOR (*turning to his Clerks; pointing to the Miller and his Son*). Look, will you!

(*He turns to the Miller.*)

Pray, honest friend, is that beast your own?

MILLER. Yes, my lord Mayor.

MAYOR. One would not think so from the way you load him. Say you not so, my Clerks?

FIRST CLERK (*bowing*). Just so, my lord Mayor.

SECOND CLERK (*bowing*). Even so, my lord Mayor.

THE MAYOR (*to the Miller and his Son*). Why, you two fellows are better able to carry the poor donkey than he you! Say you not so, my Clerks?

FIRST CLERK (*bowing*). Just so, my lord Mayor.

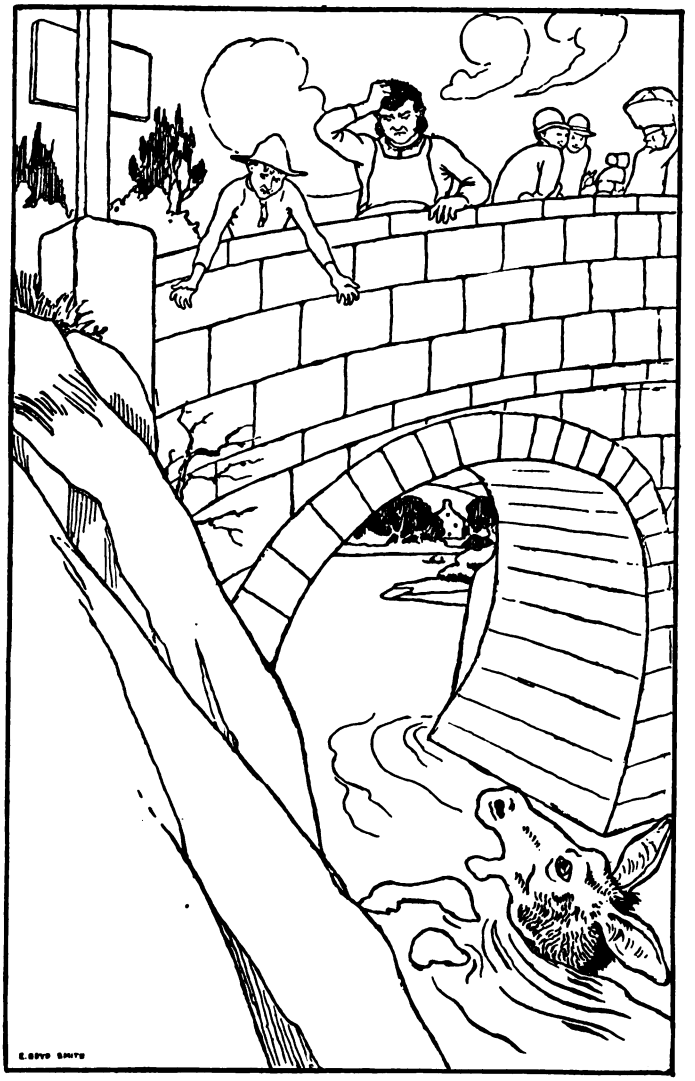
SECOND CLERK (*bowing*). Even so, my lord Mayor.

MILLER. Come, my son, to please them, we'll carry the donkey.

[*They dismount and try to lift the donkey. This frightens the poor beast. He tries to get away, and falls over the bridge into the deep river.*]

MILLER (*weeping*). I have tried to please every one! I have pleased no one!

SON (*weeping*). And we have lost our donkey in the bargain!



"WE HAVE LOST OUR DONKEY"

EACH IN HIS OWN PLACE

TIME: *yesterday.*

PLACE: *in a tiny house.*

THE STRAW *who brings in the wood.*

THE COAL *who makes the fire.*

THE SNOWFLAKE *who draws the water.*

THE SUGAR LOAF *who lays the table.*

THE SAUSAGE *who cooks the meals.*

[*The tiny kitchen is seen. The* SAUSAGE *is stirring the pot. The* COAL *is tending the fire. The* SUGAR LOAF *is laying the table. Enter* STRAW *with a load of wood.*]

STRAW (*throwing down wood*). Think you'll need more wood for the dinner, Sausage?

[*Sausage does not answer. She gets into the pot to flavor the vegetables.*]

COAL (*whispers to Straw*). Sausage is quite put out.

STRAW. What's the trouble?

COAL. No one knows.

[*Enter* SNOWFLAKE *with a pail of water.*]

SNOWFLAKE (*looking about*). Where's Sausage?

STRAW. She is flavoring the vegetables.

[*Sausage comes out of the pot.*]

SNOWFLAKE. Here is the water, Sausage.

[*Sausage does not answer.*]

SNOWFLAKE (*speaking louder*). Will you come for the water, Sausage?

SAUSAGE (*sharply*). No, madam, I will not!

THE OTHERS (*with surprise*). Sausage!

SAUSAGE. I've been slave here long enough!

THE OTHERS (*as before*). Sister Sausage!

SAUSAGE. I mean just what I say!

SNOWFLAKE. Have I not done my share of the work?

COAL. Have I not done my share?

STRAW. Have I not done my share?

SUGAR LOAF. And have I not done my share?

SAUSAGE. Please to tell me what you do.

STRAW. I bring in wood that Coal may make the fire.

COAL. I make the fire that the pot may boil.

SNOWFLAKE. I draw the water and bring it from the brook.

SUGAR LOAF. I lay the table nicely.

SAUSAGE. What do I? Eh? What do I? I must stand over the fire. I must not only stir the dinner, I must flavor it with myself. For each of you there is one duty. For me there are plainly three.

STRAW. But, sister —

SAUSAGE (*interrupting*). Don't "sister" me!

SNOWFLAKE. Sausage, dear, would you break up our pretty home?

SUGAR LOAF. And we all so happy here!

SAUSAGE. There must be a change! Some one else can stand over the fire — can stir the pot — can flavor the vegetables.

COAL. If I flavored them, they could not be eaten.

SAUSAGE. That's what you're always saying, but I'm not so sure of it.

SNOWFLAKE. If I stirred the pot, 't would be the end of me.

SAUSAGE. Yes, you say that often enough, but I'm not so sure that it is true.

STRAW. Should I stand over the fire, I'd be no more.

SAUSAGE (*scornfully*). Excuses! Excuses!

SUGAR LOAF. 'T is plain that I should not get into the pot.

SAUSAGE. And why not, Miss? why not?

SUGAR LOAF. 'T would be good-by for me, if I should!

SAUSAGE. Excuses! Excuses! I say there must be a change! 'T is I who will bring the wood or draw the water.

COAL. But, Sausage, you should stay within.

SAUSAGE. Not I, sir! I'll out of the pot and out of the house, I will! I'll see a bit of the world, I will!

SUGAR LOAF (*sighing*). Well, if she will, she will!

SAUSAGE (*getting slips*). Come, now, and draw for it.

[*She holds the slips for the others to draw.*]

STRAW (*drawing; reading from slip*). "Who gets this must make the fire."

SUGAR LOAF (*drawing; reading from slip*). "Who gets this must draw the water."

SNOWFLAKE (*drawing; reading from slip*). "Who gets this must stir the pot and flavor it with herself."

COAL (*drawing; reading from slip*). "Who gets this must lay the table nicely."

SAUSAGE (*reading from last slip*). "Who gets this must bring the wood." Well, that pleases me! Straw, see if the fire needs wood.

(*Straw hesitates.*)

Come, come, do your duty!

[*Straw crosses the hearth and looks into the fire. He is very careful, but the fire reaches him and he is gone in a puff!*]

SNOWFLAKE. Poor Straw! Well, 't is my duty to stir the pot and to flavor it with myself.

[*She crosses to the hearth, but just as she reaches it, she disappears without so much as a cry.*]

SUGAR LOAF. Poor Snowflake! Well, 't is my duty to draw the water.

[*She forgets that the pail is full, falls into it, and is seen no more.*]

COAL. Poor Sugar Loaf! Well, 't is my duty to lay the table nicely.

[*He forgets that he is still burning from having*

lately tended the fire. As he places the plates, the tablecloth catches fire and wraps itself around him.]

COAL (*from inside the burning cloth*). This is the end of me!

SAUSAGE (*weeping*). Dear me! Dear me! Who would have thought 't would turn out so badly! Well, 't is my duty to bring in wood.

[*She opens the door and is face to face with a hungry dog who is sniffing about.*]

DOG. Ah, I thought you'd be coming out soon!

SAUSAGE (*pleased*). Do you want to see me, sir?

DOG. Why, yes, I've been waiting for you.

SAUSAGE. How good to be out in the world! They always said my place was within.

DOG. They did, eh? Well, just to please them, I'll put you there.

[*He swallows her quickly, which ends both Sister Sausage and our story.*]

WHAT THE GOODMAN DOES IS ALWAYS RIGHT

SCENE I

TIME: *early one morning.*
PLACE: *a very old farmhouse.*

THE GOODMAN.
HIS WIFE.

[*The* GOODMAN *and his* WIFE *are seated in their spare room because it is Fair-day.*]

WIFE. Yes, I think it would be as well to sell our horse. Or, as you say, we might exchange him for something more useful.

GOODMAN. What shall we exchange him for?

WIFE. You know best, Goodman. Whatever you do will be right.

GOODMAN (*starting out*). It is Fair-day. I will ride into town and see what can be done.

WIFE. Wait till I fasten your neckerchief! You shall have a pretty double bow this time, for you are going to the Fair.

(*She ties the neckerchief. The Goodman starts out.*)

Wait till I have smoothed your hat!

(*She smooths his old hat.*)

Now you are ready.

GOODMAN (*going*). Be at the window, Wife.

WIFE (*nodding*). Yes, surely, and I will wave at you as you ride by.

SCENE II

TIME: *two hours later.*

PLACE: *near the toll-gate on the road to the Fair.*

THE GOODMAN. THIRD PEASANT.
FIRST PEASANT. TOLL-KEEPER.
SECOND PEASANT. HOSTLER.

[*The* GOODMAN *is seen riding his horse. Enter, from a country lane, a* PEASANT, *driving a cow.*]

GOODMAN (*stopping; calling*). Halloo, there — you with the cow!

PEASANT (*stopping*). Yes, Goodman.

GOODMAN. Your cow gives good milk, I am certain.

PEASANT (*nodding*). None richer in this country!

GOODMAN. A horse is of more value than a cow, but I don't care for that. A cow will be more useful to me; so if you like, we'll exchange.

PEASANT. To be sure I will. Here is your cow.

GOODMAN. Here is your horse.

[*The Peasant goes off riding the horse. A* SECOND PEASANT, *driving a sheep, enters from a field near by.*]

GOODMAN (*sees him and calls*). Halloo, there — you with the sheep!

SECOND PEASANT (*stopping*). Yes, Goodman.

GOODMAN. I should like to have that sheep.

SECOND PEASANT. She is a good, fat sheep.

GOODMAN. There is plenty of grass for her by our fence at home, and in the winter we could keep her in the room with us.

SECOND PEASANT. Do you wish to buy her?

GOODMAN. Will you take my cow in exchange?

SECOND PEASANT. I am willing. Here is your sheep.

GOODMAN. Here is your cow.

[*The second Peasant goes off driving the cow.*

Enter, from a farmyard near by, a THIRD PEASANT *carrying a goose.*]

GOODMAN. What a heavy creature you have there!

THIRD PEASANT (*stopping*). She has plenty of feathers and plenty of fat.

GOODMAN. She would look well paddling in the water at our place.

THIRD PEASANT (*stopping*). She would look well in any place!

GOODMAN. She would be very useful to my wife. She could make all sorts of profit out of her.

THIRD PEASANT. Indeed she could, Goodman!

GOODMAN. How often she has said, — "If now we only had a goose!"

THIRD PEASANT. Well, this goose is for sale.

GOODMAN. I will give my sheep for your goose and thanks into the bargain.

THIRD PEASANT. I am willing; here is your goose.

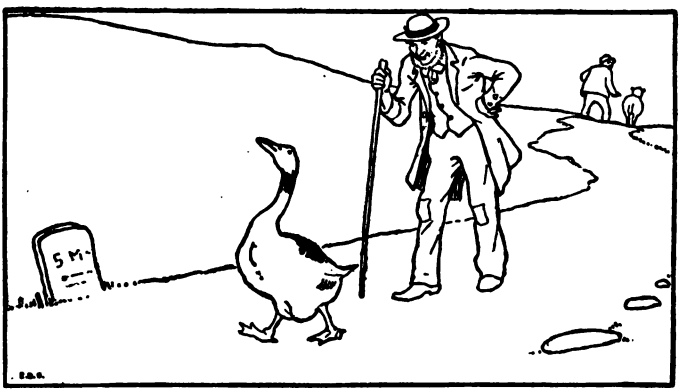
GOODMAN. Here is your sheep.

[*The Peasant goes off with the sheep. The Goodman discovers a hen in the* TOLL-KEEPER'S *potato field.*]

GOODMAN (*calling*). That's the finest fowl I ever saw, Toll-keeper!

TOLL-KEEPER. You're right about that, Goodman.

GOODMAN. She's finer than our pastor's brood-



hen! Upon my word she is! I should like to have that fowl!

TOLL-KEEPER. She is for sale.

GOODMAN. I think it would be a good exchange if I could get her for my goose.

TOLL-KEEPER. Well, it would n't be a bad thing.

GOODMAN. Then here is your goose.

TOLL-KEEPER. Here is your fowl.

[*Enter a* HOSTLER *carrying a sack.*]

GOODMAN (*to Hostler*). What have you in that sack, friend?

HOSTLER. Rotten apples—to feed the pigs with.

GOODMAN. Why, that will be a terrible waste. I should like to take them home to my wife.

HOSTLER (*astonished*). To your wife?

GOODMAN (*nodding*). You see, last year our old apple tree bore only one apple, which we kept in the cupboard till it was quite rotten. It was always property, my wife said.

HOSTLER. What will you give me for the sackful? Your wife would then have a great deal of property.

GOODMAN. Well, I will give you my fowl in exchange.

HOSTLER. Here is your sack of rotten apples.

GOODMAN. Here is your fowl.

[*The Hostler goes with the fowl.*]

TOLL-KEEPER. Toll, Goodman!

GOODMAN. I will not go to the Fair to-day. I have done a great deal of business, and I am tired. I will go back home.

SCENE III

TIME: *two hours later.*

PLACE: *the old farmhouse.*

THE GOODMAN.

HIS WIFE.

[*Enter the* GOODMAN, *carrying the sack. The* WIFE *waits for him in the spare room, because he has been away.*]

GOODMAN. Well, Wife, I've made the exchange.

WIFE. Ah, well, you always understand what you're about.

GOODMAN. I got a cow in exchange for the horse.

WIFE. Good! Now we shall have plenty of milk and butter and cheese on the table. That was a fine exchange!

GOODMAN. Yes, but I changed the cow for a sheep.

WIFE. Ah, better still! We have just enough grass for a sheep. — Ewe's milk and cheese! Woolen jackets and stockings! The cow could

not give all those. How you think of everything!

GOODMAN. But I changed the sheep for a goose.

WIFE. Then we shall have roast goose to eat this year. You dear Goodman, you are always thinking of something to please me!

GOODMAN. But I gave away the goose for a fowl.

WIFE. A fowl? Well, that was a good exchange. The fowl will lay eggs and hatch them. We shall soon have a poultry-yard. Ah, this is just what I was wishing for!

GOODMAN. Yes, but I exchanged the fowl for a sack of rotten apples.

WIFE. My dear, good husband! Now, I'll tell you something. Do you know, almost as soon as you left me this morning, I began thinking of what I could give you nice for supper. I thought of bacon with eggs and sweet herbs.

GOODMAN. But we have no sweet herbs.

WIFE (*nodding*). For that reason, I went over to our neighbor's and begged her to lend me a handful.

GOODMAN. That was right; they have plenty.

WIFE (*nodding*). So I thought, but she said, "Lend? I have nothing to lend, not even a rotten apple." Now I can lend *her* ten or the whole sackful. It makes me laugh to think of it. I am so glad.

GOODMAN. So you think what I did was right?

WIFE. What the Goodman does is always right.

THE CAT AND THE MOUSE

TIME: *perhaps this minute.*

PLACE: *perhaps your own garret.*

MOTHER MOUSE.

HER DAUGHTER, MISS MOUSE.

THE CAT.

[MOTHER MOUSE *and* MISS MOUSE *are in their spare room because Mother Mouse is getting ready for a journey. Miss Mouse helps her. The* CAT *is outside, peeping now and then through the window, but so slyly that the mice do not see her.*]

MOTHER MOUSE (*going*). Now mind you keep one eye on our grease-pot, child.

MISS MOUSE. That I will, dear mother!

MOTHER MOUSE. Let no one in, — no one! no one!

MISS MOUSE. No one, dear mother!

MOTHER MOUSE. I'll not be long away. Good-by, my child.

(*Starting out; stopping.*)

Mind you show no one the grease-pot, child, — no one! no one!

MISS MOUSE. No one, dear mother!

[*Mother Mouse goes out of the front door.*]

CAT (*calling through window*). Oh, Miss Mouse! Oh, Miss Mouse!

MISS MOUSE (*showing alarm*). Who calls?

CAT (*very sweetly*). Only I! Will you please let me in?

MISS MOUSE (*shaking head*). Mother said —

CAT (*interrupting quickly*). 'T is a matter of business!

MISS MOUSE (*shaking head*). But mother said —

CAT (*interrupting*). 'T is most important!

MISS MOUSE (*as before*). But mother said —

CAT (*interrupting*). I wish your advice — you are so clever!

MISS MOUSE (*showing she is pleased; starting to window*). Oh, do you truly think so?

CAT (*nodding*). Every one thinks so!

MISS MOUSE (*showing she is more pleased; going to the window*). Oh, do they, truly?

CAT. Oh, truly they do!

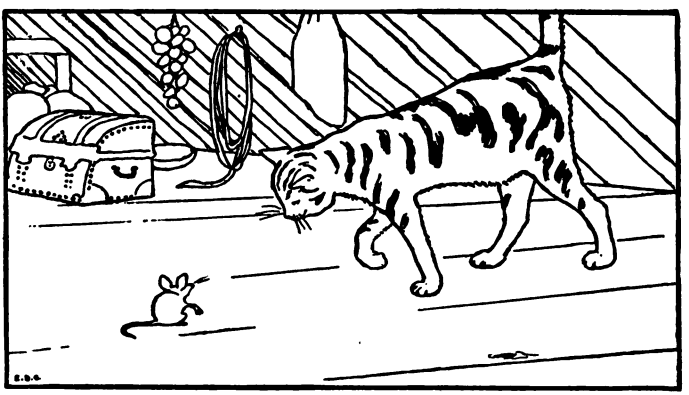
MISS MOUSE (*showing she is most pleased; opening window*). What else nice say they?

CAT (*jumping in*). That I'll tell you by and by.

(*Sniffing about.*)

There must be a grease-pot about! Am I not right?

MISS MOUSE. Mother said —



CAT (*interrupting*). Only tell me if I be right! 'T will do no harm!

MISS MOUSE (*hesitating*). Well — then — yes. But 't is put away for our winter stores.

CAT (*nodding*). Just so! Now, I can't decide where to keep my grease-pot when I have bought one. Won't you give me your advice? You are so wise.

MISS MOUSE. Do you truly think I'm wise?

CAT (*nodding*). Aye, and if you will tell me where to keep my grease-pot when I have bought it, I'll tell you something more.

MISS MOUSE (*greatly pleased*). About me?

CAT (*nodding*). Yes, — what every one says about your being so beautiful. But first I must know where to keep my grease-pot.

MISS MOUSE. Then listen — you must keep it, when you have bought it, in the northwest corner.

[*The Cat runs quickly to the northwest corner.*]

MISS MOUSE (*in alarm*). Come away! Come away!

CAT. Why, here is your grease-pot!

MISS MOUSE (*as before*). Come away, I say!

CAT (*looking into the pot*). Truly, the fat is kept hard and cool here.

MISS MOUSE. I pray you come away! Mother does not so much as let me look into it. 'T is not yet time, she says.

CAT (*looking again into pot*). Exactly!

(*She leaves the pot and joins Miss Mouse.*)

'T is just what I'll tell my kittens about my grease-pot when I have bought it.

MISS MOUSE. Ah, then you have kittens at home?

CAT (*nodding*). Such beautiful kittens! The eldest is white, with brown marks.

MISS MOUSE. He must be charming!

CAT. I've a mind to tell you his name. First, though, run out to see if your dear mother is not coming.

[*Miss Mouse nods and runs out. The Cat quickly creeps to the grease-pot and licks the top off. She crosses to the window just as* MISS MOUSE *returns.*]

MISS MOUSE. Mother is nowhere to be seen. Now what did you name your eldest child?

CAT. Top-off.

MISS MOUSE. Top-off? Why, that is a curious name! Is it common in your family?

CAT. Oh, no! My second child has a white ring around his neck.

MISS MOUSE. Remarkable!

CAT. Very!

MISS MOUSE. What did you name him?

CAT. I gave him an unusual name. I will tell you what it is. First, though, run out to see if your dear mother is coming.

[*Miss Mouse nods and runs out. The Cat creeps to the grease-pot and eats half the fat; then crosses to window.* MISS MOUSE *returns.*]

MISS MOUSE. Mother is nowhere to be seen. Now what did you name your second child?

CAT. Half-out.

MISS MOUSE. Half-out? I never heard such a name! 'T is not in the calendar, I 'm sure.

CAT. What does that matter, if it pleases me? Now the last child is really a wonder. He is quite black and has little white claws, but not a single white hair on his body.

MISS MOUSE. What have you named him?

CAT. I'm afraid that will please you no better than the others, but still I will tell you. First, though, run to see if your dear mother is not coming.

[*Miss Mouse nods and runs out. The Cat creeps to the pot and eats all the fat. She then crosses to the window.*]

CAT. What one begins one must needs finish.

[MISS MOUSE *returns.*]

MISS MOUSE. Mother is nowhere to be seen. Now tell me what you named your youngest child.

CAT. All-out.

MISS MOUSE. All-out? Why, that is more curious than the others. I have never seen it in print.

CAT (*glaring at Miss Mouse*). You never will!

MISS MOUSE (*frightened*). What do you mean?

CAT (*preparing to spring*). I mean to put you down with the fat!

MISS MOUSE. Help! help!

[*Enter* MOTHER MOUSE *just as the Cat clutches her daughter and jumps out of the window with her. Mother Mouse crosses and looks into the empty grease-pot.*]

MOTHER MOUSE (*sighing sadly*). 'T was ever thus! Show your grease-pot, and you'll go with it!

THE GIRL WHO TROD ON THE LOAF

SCENE I

TIME: *the day before Christmas.*
PLACE: *Ingé's Mother's home.*

INGÉ.
HER MOTHER.

[*The* MOTHER *stands at the kitchen window, watching for Ingé.*]

MOTHER. Ah, here she comes at last!

(*Short pause. Enter* INGÉ.)

I have waited long for you, my child. Where have you been?

(*Ingé is silent.*)

Have you been to the Elf Hill? Tell me.

INGÉ (*hesitating*). Just for a little while, mother.

MOTHER. Ingé! Ingé! What have I ever told you?

INGÉ. I thought I'd go just this once.

MOTHER (*showing sorrow*). Ah, Ingé, that's what you always say.

INGÉ. There's no harm talking with the elves.

MOTHER. And I, your mother, say there is harm.

INGÉ. But, mother, — they talk so prettily.

MOTHER (*nodding*). Aye! and that's the harm. They've put such silly ideas into your head.

INGÉ. They say 't is friendship makes them talk as they do.

MOTHER (*indignantly*). Friendship! 'T is friendship, is it, to tell you not to fetch the wood?

INGÉ. They say 't will spoil my hands.

MOTHER. Out upon them and their pretty talk! You shall go there no more. Do you hear me, Ingé?

INGÉ (*pouting*). I hear.

MOTHER. Now take this loaf of bread to your sick aunt. Say to her 't is her Christmas gift.

INGÉ. But, mother, I must cross the muddy road to go there.

MOTHER. Well, you are neither sugar nor salt.

INGÉ. I'll spoil my shoes!

MOTHER. You think of your shoes, and your aunt lies ill?

INGÉ. Wait till spring and the mud will be gone.

MOTHER. Wait till spring and your aunt will be gone! Here is the loaf — now off with you!

[*Ingé takes the loaf and goes, but not willingly.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *a few minutes later.*

PLACE: *the muddy road.*

INGÉ.

THE WICKED ELF.

[INGÉ *is seen stopping at the muddy road.*]

INGÉ. 'T is too wide to leap!

[*The* WICKED ELF *suddenly appears on the opposite side of the road.*]

WICKED ELF. Good day to you, pretty maid!

INGÉ. Good day to you, dear Elf!

WICKED ELF. Wilt cross this muddy road?

INGÉ. I must.

WICKED ELF. Then I'll tell you how to do it and not so much as wet your shoe.

INGÉ. Oh, thank you, dear Elf!

WICKED ELF. Throw down your loaf and —

INGÉ (*showing surprise; interrupting*). Throw down the loaf?

WICKED ELF. Why, yes, — to use it for a stepping-stone.

INGÉ. But 't will spoil the bread!

WICKED ELF. But 't will save your shoes!

INGÉ. Well, that's true —

WICKED ELF. A pretty maid ne'er wears a muddy shoe.

INGÉ. That's true, too —

WICKED ELF. Come, then, throw down the loaf!

INGÉ. Well, I'll do it!

(*She throws the loaf and steps upon it.*)

'T is sinking! What shall I do?

WICKED ELF. Why, then, jump off!

INGÉ (*trying to jump*). I can't! Don't you see I can't?

WICKED ELF. Ha, ha! You're fastened to it!

INGÉ. 'T is drawing me down! Help me! Help me!

WICKED ELF. There's no help for you.

INGÉ. No help? What do you mean?

WICKED ELF. You must go down with the loaf.

INGÉ. I pray you help me! See how I'm sinking! The mud will soon be over my shoes!

WICKED ELF. The mud will soon be over your head!

INGÉ (*weeping*). Save me! Save me!

WICKED ELF. Will you be saved by magic?

INGÉ. Yes, yes!

WICKED ELF. Listen, then — I'll change you into a bird. Are you willing?

INGÉ. Yes, yes! Quick now, before I sink deeper!

WICKED ELF (*nodding head three times*). A sparrow shall you be! Change, now change!

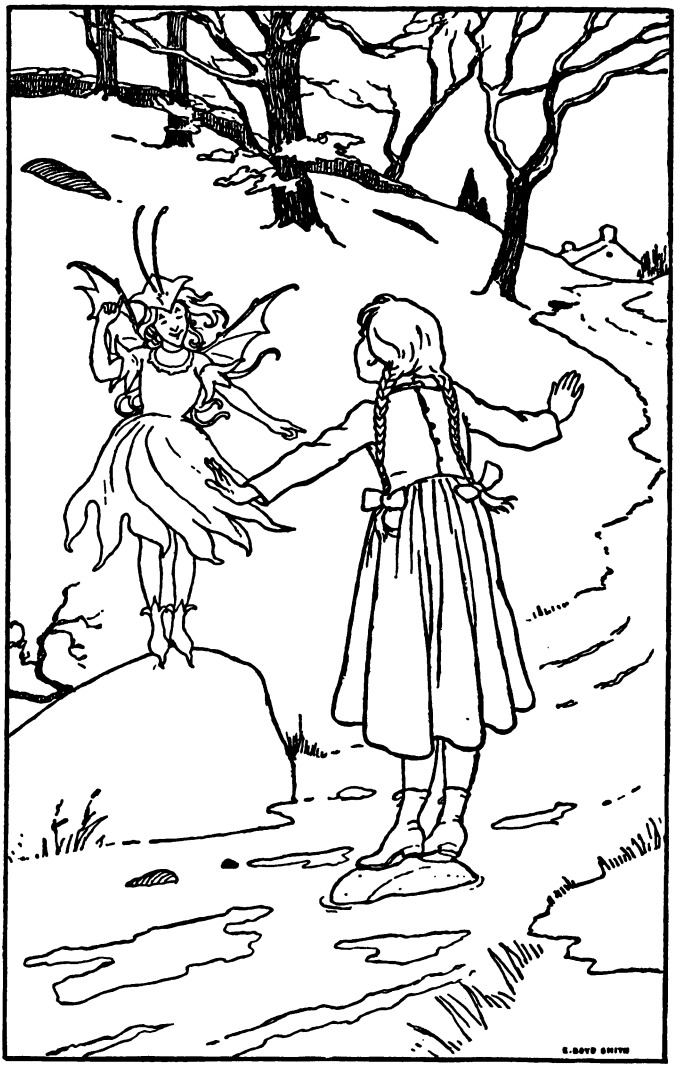
[*Ingé changes into a* SPARROW, *with a tuft of white feathers, just the shape of a loaf of bread, upon its head. The Sparrow flies from the mud.*]

SPARROW. Now change me back into Ingé.

WICKED ELF. You shall remain as you are.

SPARROW (*showing surprise*). Remain as I am?

WICKED ELF (*nodding*). Until you can change yourself back.



"'TIS SINKING! WHAT SHALL I DO?"

SPARROW. And when will that be?

WICKED ELF. When the loaf has gone from your head.

SPARROW. The loaf from my head? What do you mean?

WICKED ELF (*going*). Fly away to the brook and see! Ha, ha, ha!

(*She runs away, calling back.*)

Fly away to the brook and see! Ha, ha, ha!

SCENE III

TIME: *the day following Christmas Day.*
PLACE: *an old stone wall by a brook.*

THE SPARROW.	FIRST STONE.
THE PEASANT.	SECOND STONE.
GRETEL.	THIRD STONE.

[*The* SPARROW *sits in a hole in the wall.*]

FIRST STONE. Come, come, be not so sad, little Sparrow!

SECOND STONE. Come, lift up your head and sing!

THIRD STONE. Come, sing us your Christmas song!

SPARROW. Sing! I have nothing to sing about.

FIRST STONE. Sing of your friends.

SECOND STONE. Sing of their love for you.

THIRD STONE. Sing of their kindness to you.

SPARROW. Talk not to me of friends, or love, or kindness! There's none in the world.

[*Enter a* PEASANT *with his little* GRETEL. *The Peasant carries two ears of corn.*]

PEASANT. Now, my Gretel, we'll place the corn here on the old wall.

GRETEL. Mother thought you brought too much.

PEASANT. Well, 't is true there are only three ears left at home, but the birds must have their Christmas dinner.

[*He places the corn on the wall.*]

GRETEL. There's none about to see it!

PEASANT. Oh, some bird will soon find it!

GRETEL. But will it call the others?

PEASANT. We'll wait to see. Come, we'll sit there on the log.

[*They go to a log near by.*]

FIRST STONE. There, little Sparrow, say you now there is no kindness?

SECOND STONE. Or love?

THIRD STONE. Or friendship?

SPARROW. No, no! I can never say that again. The peasant's heart is full of kindness and love and friendship. I will sing of it! 'T will be my Christmas song!

[*The Sparrow leaves the hole and flies to the corn.*]

GRETEL. Look, father, there is a sparrow! And hear it sing! Just hear it!

PEASANT. It is calling the other birds.

GRETEL. Why, it does n't even touch the corn!

PEASANT. It 's waiting to share it with the others. Is it not a pretty sight? Come, we must go to tell mother.

SCENE IV

TIME: *one month later.*

PLACE: *same as* SCENE III.

OUR SPARROW.
THE VERY OLD SPARROW.
THE OLD SPARROW.
THE YOUNG SPARROW.
THE VERY YOUNG SPARROW.
THE WICKED ELF.

[*All the* SPARROWS *except Our Sparrow sit on the stone wall.*]

YOUNG SPARROW. I say the stranger should be driven away!

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. So say I!

OLD SPARROW. The stranger is a sparrow, but still not a sparrow.

VERY OLD SPARROW. And yet she is only different by a tuft of white feathers.

YOUNG SPARROW. And such a tuft! For all the world like a loaf of bread!

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. I'd think it shame to carry such on *my* head!

OLD SPARROW. I fear 't will shame us all to have this stranger about.

VERY OLD SPARROW. And yet we are not ashamed to eat the crumbs this stranger brings.

OLD SPARROW. Well, 't is true she has been most kind.

VERY OLD SPARROW. 'T is a hard winter! Shall we drive away the one who finds food where we find none?

YOUNG SPARROW. And calls us every time!

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. And never eats till we have come!

VERY OLD SPARROW. I've kept in mind the crumbs she has found us. Now, how many do you think?

OLD SPARROW. I cannot say, for I did not think to notice.

VERY OLD SPARROW. There only lacks two or three now of being a loaf.

OTHER SPARROWS (*greatly surprised*). A loaf?

VERY OLD SPARROW (*nodding*). A loaf.

VERY YOUNG SPARROW. Here comes the stranger now!

OLD SPARROW. She brings a crust!

[OUR SPARROW *flies up with a crust in its bill.*]

OUR SPARROW. Come, friends, 't is for all of you!

VERY OLD SPARROW. Do you know, stranger bird, that, with these crumbs, you have brought us in all one loaf?

[*Our Sparrow drops the crust for the others. At once it changes into* INGÉ. *The birds fly away frightened.*]

INGÉ. Ah! Now I understand. The loaf had to be made up, crumb by crumb.

[*The* WICKED ELF *suddenly appears.*]

WICKED ELF. Come, pretty maid, come to the Elf Hill!

INGÉ. No, no! I will not!

WICKED ELF. But we have such pretty things to tell you!

INGÉ. I care not for your pretty things! I go to fetch wood for my mother. I go to walk in the mud if need be. Away with you! I'll have none of you! Away, away, I say!

THE UGLY DUCKLING

SCENE I

TIME: *one summer morning.*

PLACE: *the farmyard of the Moor Farm.*

MADAM DUCK.	TURKEY.
FIRST DUCKLING.	GRAY GANDER.
SECOND DUCKLING.	WHITE GOOSE.
THE UGLY DUCKLING.	PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN.
THIRD DUCKLING.	RED ROOSTER.

[MADAM DUCK *enters the farmyard with her new brood of* DUCKLINGS. *The other fowls approach.*]

TURKEY (*showing displeasure*). A new brood of ducks! Look you all — a new brood of ducks!

GRAY GANDER (*also displeased*). As if there were not enough of us here already!

WHITE GOOSE (*likewise displeased*). True enough, — I can scarce find a corner for my afternoon nap!

RED ROOSTER. It seems to me, Madam Duck, that you should not have brought us a new brood this summer.

MADAM DUCK. What is that you are saying?

TURKEY. It seems to all of us, madam, that there is no room here for a new brood.

PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN. Friends, be just. Madam Duck has a perfect right to bring her ducklings here. Besides, the children are quite pretty.

MADAM DUCK. They are beautiful! You shall all see that for yourselves. Come, children, into a row with you!

[*The Ducklings form themselves into a row. The Ugly Duckling is last.*]

MADAM DUCK. Legs wide apart! Toes out! Now speak prettily to my old friends.

DUCKLINGS (*all but the last*). Quack! Quack!

MADAM DUCK. There now — are they not charming?

GRAY GANDER (*looking down row*). Why, yes, they all seem graceful enough — here — wait a moment! Does that last one there belong to you?

[*All the fowls look at the last Duckling.*]

MADAM DUCK. Oh yes! He is larger than the others and perhaps not so pretty, but —

TURKEY (*interrupting*). Make no excuses for him, madam. We can see for ourselves what he is.

GRAY GANDER. In all my life I never saw anything so ugly!

WHITE GOOSE. He is neither duck nor goose!

PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN. Nor duck nor chick!

TURKEY. I'd be 'shamed to have a turkey look like that!

RED ROOSTER. I'd allow no hen of mine to claim him!

MADAM DUCK. Come now, come now, friends. The poor child is not pretty, but he is good, and he can swim even better than the others.

TURKEY. That he can swim well is nothing to me!

RED ROOSTER. Nor to me! He should be driven out, I say!

MADAM DUCK. Let him alone; he is not doing any harm.

FIRST DUCKLING. But, mother, no one will look at us if he stays with us!

MADAM DUCK (*thoughtfully.*) Now perhaps it may turn out that way.

SECOND DUCKLING. I'll not walk about with him!

THIRD DUCKLING. Nor I!

MADAM DUCK. Well, well! He must be uglier than I thought!

FIRST DUCKLING. Besides, dear mother, he will not quack.

MADAM DUCK. What is this? Did he not quack but just a moment ago?

SECOND DUCKLING. He turned his toes out, but quack he would not.

THIRD DUCKLING. 'T is true, dear mother.

MADAM DUCK (*to the Ugly Duckling*). Quack! Quack now — at once!

[*The Ugly Duckling tries to quack, but chokes. The fowls laugh and jeer at him.*]

GRAY GANDER. Ha, ha! There's a "quack" for you!

WHITE GOOSE. Ha, ha!

PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN. Ha, ha!

RED ROOSTER. Ha, ha!

TURKEY. Ha, ha!

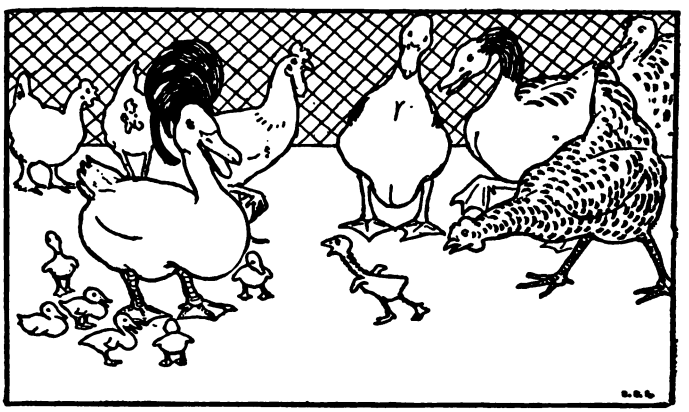
MADAM DUCK (*angrily*). Once more I tell you — quack!

[*The Ugly Duckling tries again; chokes.*]

ALL FOWLS. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

UGLY DUCKLING (*weeping*). I'm sorry — I'd quack if I could.

MADAME DUCK. Ah, if you were only far away!



FIRST DUCKLING. I wish the cat would eat you!

SECOND DUCKLING. I wish the swans would kill you!

WHITE GOOSE. And they will when they see him — you may be sure of that.

GRAY GANDER (*nodding*). Aye, they'll not suffer such an ugly creature to swim in the brook!

RED ROOSTER. We must drive him off — that's clear!

(*Running at the Ugly Duckling.*)

Come now, out with you!

PLYMOUTH ROCK HEN (*pecking Duckling*). Out with you!

UGLY DUCKLING. Mother, save me!

MADAM DUCK. Call not on me!

GRAY GANDER (*striking Duckling with his wings*). Out with you!

UGLY DUCKLING (*running to Ducklings*). Brothers, sisters, save me!

FIRST DUCKLING. Come not to us!

SECOND DUCKLING. We'll not save you!

THIRD DUCKLING. Away with you!

TURKEY. At him, hens to peck him! At him, geese to beat him! At him, all of you!

[*They all rush upon the Ugly Duckling, who escapes them, running out of the farmyard into the moor.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *the next winter.*

PLACE: *the Peasant's cottage.*

THE PEASANT.	THE CAT.
HIS WIFE.	THE HEN.
ELIZABETH.	THE UGLY DUCKLING.

[*The* PEASANT *enters the cottage, carrying the* UGLY DUCKLING.]

PEASANT. See what I'm bringing you!

WIFE. Why, 't is a duckling—half frozen, too!

PEASANT. I found him frozen in the pond. I had to break the ice to get him out.

ELIZABETH. Give him to me, father. I will put him behind the stove.

PEASANT (*giving Duckling to Elizabeth*). That's a good child.

WIFE. Handle him tenderly, daughter.

ELIZABETH (*taking off her shawl*). He shall lie upon my shawl. You poor, dear, ugly little duckling!

[*She places the Duckling upon the shawl behind the stove, near the* CAT *and* HEN.]

PEASANT. 'T is the duckling I told you of!

WIFE. The one you saw on the pond yesterday?

PEASANT. Aye, and the day before, and all winter long, for that matter. Yesterday I saw him try to join the wild ducks on the river, but they drove him back to the pond.

ELIZABETH. Poor duckling! The pond was freezing then!

PEASANT (*nodding*). Then he tried to find a place among the rushes on the moor, but the birds drove him from there.

ELIZABETH. Why did they all treat him so, father?

PEASANT. I do not know, unless it is because he is so ugly.

WIFE. Come now to dinner, father — Elizabeth. By the time we have finished, our duckling will be warmed and awake.

[*They go into the kitchen. The Duckling stirs and looks about.*]

HEN. Can you lay eggs?

DUCKLING (*politely*). No, madam.

CAT. Can you set up your back?

DUCKLING. No, dear sir.

CAT. Can you purr?

DUCKLING (*frightened*). No.

HEN. Then you can't stay here.

DUCKLING. Do not drive me out, I pray you!

CAT. Will you learn to purr?

HEN. And to lay eggs?

DUCKLING (*sadly*). Alas, I can do nothing but swim.

CAT. Swim! Well, I must say that is very queer.

DUCKLING. Oh, no, dear sir! It is most pleasant when the waters close over your head and you plunge to the bottom.

CAT. Plunge to the bottom, indeed! I'd never think of doing such a silly thing!

HEN. Nor I!

CAT. 'T is clear you can't remain here.

DUCKLING. Where am I to go?

CAT. Go lie in the rushes. The birds flew south this morning.

DUCKLING. I shall starve there.

CAT. It would really be a good thing for you if I should eat you.

DUCKLING. I'd thank you to do so, dear sir.

HEN. Eat him, since he is so willing. He is too ugly to live.

CAT (*turning away*). I can't, he is too ugly to eat.

(*To the Duckling.*)

Come, out with you!

HEN (*running at him*). Yes, yes! Out with you! Out with you!

[*They push the Duckling out of the door into the snow.*]

DUCKLING. Alas! What shall I do? Where shall I go? Why was I made so ugly that every one despises me!

SCENE III

TIME : *the next spring.*

PLACE: *the brook on the Moor Farm.*

THE UGLY DUCKLING.	THE MOTHER.
THE MOLE.	THE CHILDREN.
THE FATHER.	THE SWANS.

[*The* UGLY DUCKLING *sits on the hill of a* MOLE *near the brook which winds through the Moor Farm.*]

MOLE (*from the mole hill*). Will you please move? I wish to come out.

DUCKLING (*rising quickly*). Why, 't is a mole hill I 've been sitting on!

(*The Mole comes out from the hill.*)

I 'm sorry, friend Mole, I did n't notice your hill.

MOLE. Who are you?

DUCKLING. Madam Duck of this farm is my mother.

MOLE. That can't be! You are no duck.

DUCKLING. Yes, but I am. Only, I am uglier than any duck in the world.

MOLE. You have not the voice of a duck. You do not speak with the quack of which they are so proud. And then, if you are truly a duck, why are you not with your family?

DUCKLING. They drove me out last summer because I was ugly and could not quack.

MOLE. Then why have you come back?

DUCKLING. To let the swans kill me.

MOLE. What! To let them kill you?

DUCKLING. I would rather be killed by those beautiful birds than pecked by the hens, beaten by the geese, or starved with hunger in the winter.

MOLE. Perhaps you are not so ugly now as you were then.

DUCKLING. I have not looked at myself in the water since spring came and took the ice away. But I know well enough how dark and badly formed I am. The swans will kill me if I dare to approach them.

[*A noise is heard in the distance.*]

MOLE. They are coming! Go, while there is yet time.

DUCKLING. There is no place to go to. All

winter long I was driven from moor to moor. I could not make a friend — I no longer wish to live.

[*The* SWANS *are seen swimming down the brook.*]

MOLE. They are here! Do not go to them, I pray you!

DUCKLING (*shaking head*). Farewell!

[*He flies to the water and swims toward the Swans. They see him and rush to meet him with outstretched wings.*]

DUCKLING. Kill me! Kill me!

FIRST SWAN. Kill you! Why, we have come to welcome you, beautiful stranger.

SECOND SWAN. We saw you from afar, and came to meet you.

THIRD SWAN. We are so happy to have you with us!

[*Enter several* CHILDREN.]

FIRST CHILD. See, there is a new swan!

SECOND CHILD (*calling*). Father, mother, come! There is another swan!

[*Enter the* FATHER *and* MOTHER.]

FATHER. What were you calling?

THIRD CHILD. A new swan has come! Look!

MOTHER. I see him! He is beautiful!

FATHER. He is very young, but he is the most beautiful of all!

FOURTH CHILD. See how the others stroke him with their beaks!

MOTHER. They are showing him how glad they are to have him with them. See how they swim around him and how gently they touch him!

FATHER. I have never seen anything so pretty. How happy the new swan is! See how he rustles his feathers! See how proudly he curves his slender neck!

FIRST CHILD. And see how he looks at himself in the water!

SECOND CHILD. Let's get bread and cake for him!

THIRD CHILD. Yes, yes!

FOURTH CHILD. Yes, yes!

[*The Children run off, followed by the Father and Mother.*]

MOLE (*going into his hill*). 'T was not so bad after all — not to have the family quack!

THE RED SHOES

SCENE I

TIME: *one morning.*

PLACE: *the Shoemaker's shop.*

GRANDMOTHER.

KAREN.

SHOEMAKER.

[*The* GRANDMOTHER *and* KAREN *enter the shop of the* SHOEMAKER.]

GRANDMOTHER. This is my little granddaughter Karen, Shoemaker. Please to take her measure for a pair of shoes.

SHOEMAKER. What kind do you wish, madam?

GRANDMOTHER. Morocco, the finest you have. Karen is to wear these shoes to church.

SHOEMAKER. What color do you wish, madam?

GRANDMOTHER. Black.

KAREN (*whispering to Shoemaker*). Red.

SHOEMAKER (*puzzled*). Eh?

GRANDMOTHER (*louder*). Black.

KAREN (*whispering to Shoemaker*). Red.

SHOEMAKER. Of course, madam, if you say black, black they shall be.

KAREN. The little princess wore red shoes, Grandmother.

SHOEMAKER (*nodding*). That is true; I saw them myself.

GRANDMOTHER. Red shoes?

KAREN (*nodding*). Of beautiful red morocco. The queen let the princess stand at a window so every one could see her new shoes.

SHOEMAKER. It is all true, madam.

GRANDMOTHER. No matter; Karen is to have black shoes.

(*Taking up a pair of shoes.*)

Here, this pair suits me exactly.

SHOEMAKER (*surprised*). But, madam, those shoes are —

KAREN (*interrupting; whispering*). Hush, Shoemaker! Do not tell her. She can't see very well.

GRANDMOTHER (*giving shoes to Karen*). Are

they of polished leather? They shine as if they were.

KAREN. Yes; they do shine.

(*Trying on the shoes.*)

And they just fit me, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER. I will take them, Shoemaker.

SHOEMAKER. But, madam —

KAREN (*interrupting; whispering*). Hush, Shoemaker! She will never know the difference.

GRANDMOTHER. Here is the money, Shoemaker. Come, Karen.

SHOEMAKER. But, madam —

KAREN (*interrupting*). I am ready, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER. Good day, Shoemaker.

SHOEMAKER. But, madam —

KAREN (*interrupting*). Good day, Shoemaker.

[*The Grandmother and Karen go.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *the next Sunday, after church.*
PLACE: *the Grandmother's home.*

THE GRANDMOTHER.
KAREN.
THE NEIGHBORS { *First.* *Second.* *Third.* *Fourth.*

[*The* NEIGHBORS *sit with the* GRANDMOTHER *in the spare room because it is Sunday.*]

FIRST NEIGHBOR. I did not see you at church to-day, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER. I could not go, but I sent little Karen.

SECOND NEIGHBOR (*mysteriously*). Oh, yes; we saw her! Everybody saw her!

GRANDMOTHER (*proudly*). People do look at her; she is so pretty.

THIRD NEIGHBOR. People did n't look at her face to-day.

GRANDMOTHER (*alarmed*). What do you mean?

THIRD NEIGHBOR. Ask Karen when she returns. We're not the ones to carry tales.

GRANDMOTHER (*looking out window*). Here she comes now!

FOURTH NEIGHBOR. Just ask her about the sermon and the hymns!

GRANDMOTHER (*proudly*). She will tell me almost every word the pastor said. She is a smart girl — that Karen.

[*Enter* KAREN.]

KAREN. Well, Grandmother, here I am! Good morning, Neighbors.

NEIGHBORS (*coldly*). Good morning, Karen.

GRANDMOTHER. Now tell me about the sermon, Karen. What was the text?

KAREN (*with confusion; stammering*). The text? It was — it was — Oh, I will tell you all about it by and by, Grandmother. Our Neighbors want to talk with you now.

FIRST NEIGHBOR. Oh, no! We would rather hear you tell your Grandmother about the sermon and the music.

GRANDMOTHER. What hymns did they sing, Karen?

KAREN (*as before*). Hymns? They sang — let me see — they sang —

[*She stops in confusion.*]

GRANDMOTHER. Why, Karen! Are you ill?

SECOND NEIGHBOR. No, Grandmother, Karen is not ill. She is ashamed. She was not thinking of the beautiful music nor of the sermon this morning. Is that not true, Karen?

KAREN (*ashamed*). Y-e-s —

GRANDMOTHER. What is this?

THIRD NEIGHBOR. Tell your Grandmother what you were thinking about in church, Karen.

KAREN. I was thinking about — about — my new shoes.

GRANDMOTHER. A great thing to think about in church — a pair of plain black shoes!

FOURTH NEIGHBOR. She did not wear her black shoes; she wore *red shoes!*

GRANDMOTHER (*gasping*). Red shoes — to church?

FIRST NEIGHBOR (*nodding*). Every one was terribly shocked!

GRANDMOTHER (*still gasping*). Red shoes to church!

SECOND NEIGHBOR. Even the pastor looked at her shoes!

GRANDMOTHER (*indignantly*). Red shoes to church!

THIRD NEIGHBOR. The choir looked! All fixed their eyes on Karen's red shoes.

GRANDMOTHER. It is the most shocking thing I ever heard! Do you hear me, Karen?

KAREN (*hanging her head in shame*). Yes, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER. You must never, never, so long as you live, wear red shoes to church again. It is not at all proper. Do you hear me, Karen?

KAREN (*as before*). Yes, Grandmother.

FOURTH NEIGHBOR. Do you think she should have her Sunday dinner?

GRANDMOTHER. Not one bite! She shall stay in her room all day. Do you hear me, Karen?

KAREN. Yes, Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER. Thank you for telling me, Neighbors. To think of it! Red shoes to church!

SCENE III

TIME: *the following Sunday, after church.*
PLACE: *the churchyard.*

THE GRANDMOTHER.
KAREN.
THE OLD SOLDIER.
THE COACHMAN.

[*The* GRANDMOTHER *and* KAREN *come from the church. The* OLD SOLDIER *stands near the church door. He tries to speak to the Grandmother, but she does not hear him.*]

KAREN. Wait a moment, Grandmother! The Old Soldier wants to speak with you.

GRANDMOTHER (*turning*). What do you want, Old Soldier?

OLD SOLDIER. I want to dust your shoes, madam.

GRANDMOTHER. That is very good of you.

(*Old Soldier dusts her shoes*).

Thank you; now I will go to my carriage while you dust Karen's shoes.

[*She goes.*]

OLD SOLDIER. Stretch out your foot, little Karen.

(*Karen thrusts out her foot.*)

What is this? Red shoes for church?

KAREN. I looked at my old black shoes —

OLD SOLDIER (*interrupting*). And then at your new red ones?

KAREN (*nodding*). Yes, and then at my black ones again —

OLD SOLDIER (*interrupting*). And then put on your red ones!

KAREN. Sh-h! Grandmother must not know.

OLD SOLDIER. She can't hear, for I am talking through my long red beard.

KAREN. Why is your beard so red, Old Soldier?

OLD SOLDIER. To make more light for my eyes — that I may see without looking.

KAREN. See without looking?

OLD SOLDIER (*nodding*). I was not in the church, yet I saw you clearly when you knelt at the altar and raised the golden cup to your lips.

KAREN (*surprised*). You saw that?

OLD SOLDIER (*nodding*). And more — I saw your thoughts.

KAREN. You saw my thoughts?

OLD SOLDIER (*nodding*). It was to you as if your red shoes passed before your eyes in the cup. Am I not right?

KAREN (*showing fear*). Y-e-s —

OLD SOLDIER. And I saw by the light of my beard that you forgot to sing the hymns; eh, Karen?

KAREN. Y-e-s —

OLD SOLDIER. And that you forgot to say your prayers; eh, Karen?

KAREN. Y-e-s —

OLD SOLDIER. You were thinking of your red shoes all the time.

KAREN. Y-e-s, Old Soldier.

OLD SOLDIER (*holding Karen and stooping until his beard covers her shoes*). Cover and touch and change, my beard! Cover and touch and change!

KAREN. What are you doing? Let me go!

OLD SOLDIER (*holding her firmly*). I am turning your red shoes into dancing shoes!

KAREN. I am afraid of you! Let me go!

OLD SOLDIER (*slapping soles of her shoes with hand*). Now I have made them stick fast to your feet!

KAREN (*calling*). Grandmother! Grandmother!

OLD SOLDIER. Now you may go! Ha, ha!

KAREN. Why! I am dancing! I can't stop! Grandmother! Grandmother!

GRANDMOTHER. What is this? Mercy on me! She is dancing down the street! Run after her, Coachman! Quick! Stop her!

COACHMAN (*running after Karen*). Stop, Mistress Karen! I'm after you!

OLD SOLDIER. Ha, ha, ha! You will never catch her!

GRANDMOTHER (*calling after Coachman*). There she goes around the corner!

COACHMAN (*calling off*). I'll get you, Mistress Karen! Just stop a bit!

OLD SOLDIER. Ha, ha, ha! You will never catch her!

GRANDMOTHER. My poor Karen! My poor Karen!

COACHMAN (*returning*). I could n't catch her, madam! She danced right out of the town gate!

GRANDMOTHER. Out of the town gate?

COACHMAN. Yes, madam, and straight for the dark wood.

GRANDMOTHER. We will drive after her!

[*Coachman jumps to his seat.*]

OLD SOLDIER. Ha, ha, ha! You will never catch her!

GRANDMOTHER. Quick, Coachman, quick! We must catch her before she gets to the dark wood. My poor Karen! My poor Karen!

[*The carriage dashes off.*]

SCENE IV

TIME: *three days later; evening.*

PLACE: *the dark wood. A hut is seen among the vines.*

THE FORESTER.	THE EXECUTIONER.
HIS SON.	THE OLD SOLDIER.
KAREN.	THE FAIRY QUEEN.

MOON.

[*The* FORESTER *and his* SON *are felling a tree.*]

KAREN (*heard calling off*). Stop me! Stop me!

SON. Heard you that cry?

FORESTER (*looking off*). Mercy on us! 'T is the dancing girl I told you of!

[*Enter* KAREN, *dancing.*]

KAREN. Stop me, Forester!

FORESTER. No, no! I dare not!

KAREN (*to Son*). Stop me, I pray you! Three days have I danced! I can endure it no longer!

SON (*to Forester*). Come, let us help her!

FORESTER. Do not touch her! She is bewitched!

KAREN. 'T is my shoes are bewitched — not I!

SON. I say, little maid, pull off your shoes!

KAREN. They will not come off. See!

[*She pulls at her shoes.*]

SON (*starting towards Karen*). I 'll get them off, bewitched or not bewitched!

FORESTER (*seizing Son*). Would you get yourself into trouble? Come home with me!

[*Forester runs from wood with Son. The* MOON *arises suddenly in a fir tree.*]

KAREN. O Moon, see how I dance below you! Pray tell me how to break this spell!

MOON. Ha, ha, ha!

[*The Moon changes into the red beard of the* OLD SOLDIER.]

OLD SOLDIER. My beard makes moonlight for me that I may watch you dance.

KAREN. Mercy, Old Soldier! I pray you break your spell!

OLD SOLDIER. You forgot to say the prayers! You thought only of your red shoes!

KAREN. I will go barefoot to church!

OLD SOLDIER. You whispered "red" to the Shoemaker!

KAREN. I will never deceive my dear Grandmother again! Have pity!

OLD SOLDIER. You shall dance in your red shoes till you are pale and cold! By night and by day you shall dance; in sunshine and in rain; in snow and in sleet. Over highways and byways shall you dance; in dark swamps and on mountain tops. You shall go on dancing, dancing, dancing, forever and ever!

[*He disappears.*]

KAREN. I cannot dance on forever! I cannot! I cannot!

(*Weeping; pause.*)

Well, I know a way to break the spell, and I 'll do it!

(*Crossing to hut of the* EXECUTIONER; *knocking.*)

Come out! Come out!

EXECUTIONER (*from within the hut*). Come in!

KAREN. I cannot come in; I must dance.

EXECUTIONER. Then I will come out.

(*The Executioner comes out from hut.*)

Well, do you know me?

KAREN. You are the Executioner.

EXECUTIONER. I am the Executioner. I cut off the heads of wicked people with this great ax.

KAREN. Do not strike off my head!

EXECUTIONER. And why not strike off your head, pray?

KAREN. I must have that to repent of my sin. So please to cut off my feet.

EXECUTIONER. It shall be as you say. Thrust out your foot, maid.

[*Enter* FAIRY QUEEN.]

FAIRY QUEEN. Stay, Executioner, stay! I've come to save you, Karen!

KAREN. To save me?

FAIRY QUEEN. Whenever a child repents of a sin, lo, I am there to save.

KAREN. Will you remove this spell from me?

FAIRY QUEEN. Will you give up your red shoes?

KAREN. Gladly! Gladly! I wish I might never see them again!

FAIRY QUEEN. Then dance to me that I may touch you with my wand.

[*Fairy Queen touches Karen's shoes with her wand. The shoes fall off.*]

KAREN. Dear Fairy Queen! Dear Fairy Queen! I thank you! I thank you!

FAIRY QUEEN. Look, Karen, your shoes are dancing away! Soon they will be lost to you forever. Shall I not bring them back?

KAREN. No, no! Let them go! Now I am free! Now I can rest!

FAIRY QUEEN. Then come, dear child, I will guide you to your home.

THE STORY OF ALI COGIA

SCENE I

TIME: *one evening.*

PLACE: *the house of a merchant in Bagdad.*

THE MERCHANT.

THE MERCHANT'S WIFE.

[*The* MERCHANT *and his* WIFE *are at supper.*]

WIFE. Our neighbors bought some fine olives to-day. It has been a long time since we have had olives. I am quite hungry for them.

MERCHANT. Now you speak of olives, you put me in mind of the jar which Ali Cogia left with me.

WIFE (*pointing to a jar in another part of the room*). There is the very jar waiting for him against his return.

MERCHANT. Certainly he must be dead, since he has not returned in all this time. Give me a plate; I will open the jar, and if the olives be good, we will eat them.

WIFE. Pray, husband, do not commit so base an action. You know nothing is more sacred than what is left to one's care and trust.

MERCHANT. But I am certain Ali Cogia will never return.

WIFE. And I have a strong feeling that he will. What will he think of your honor if he finds the jar has been opened?

MERCHANT. Surely a jar of olives is not to be guarded so carefully, year after year.

WIFE. That is Ali Cogia's affair, not ours. Besides, the olives can't be good after all this time.

MERCHANT (*taking a plate*). I mean to have a taste of them, at least.

WIFE (*indignantly*). You are betraying the trust your friend placed in you! I will not remain to witness it.

[*She leaves the room. The Merchant crosses and takes cover from jar.*]

MERCHANT (*looking in jar*). My wife was right — the olives are covered with mould, but those at the bottom may still be good.

[*He turns the jar up and shakes out the olives. Several gold pieces fall out.*]

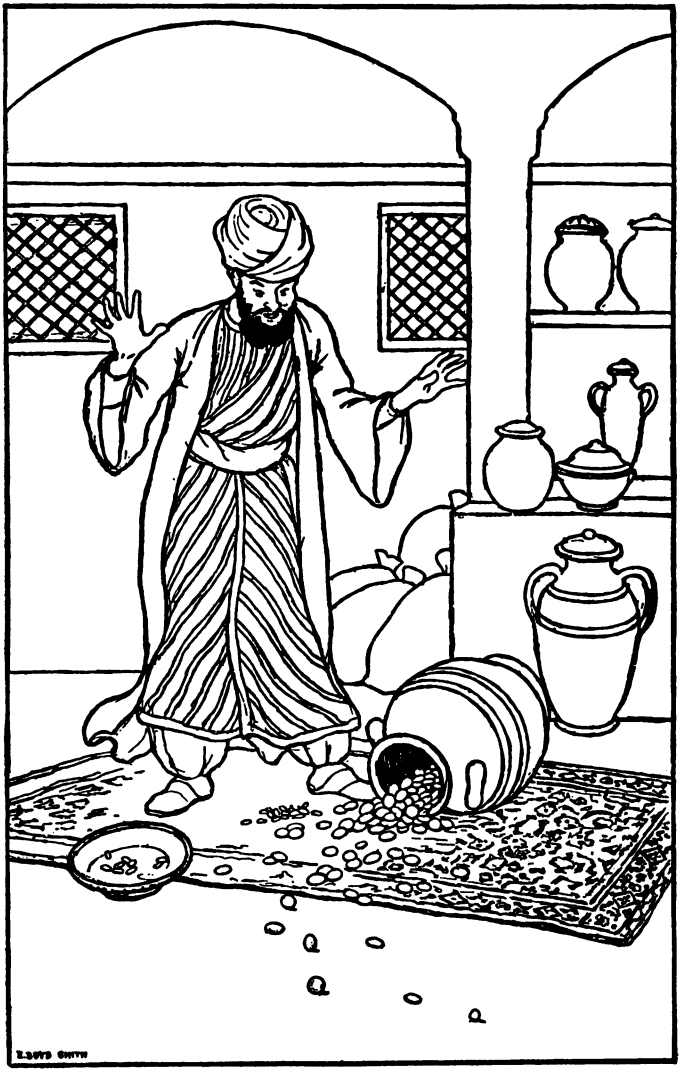
MERCHANT. What is this? Gold pieces! As I live! Gold! gold!

[*He shakes the jar again; a shower of gold pieces fall.*)

MERCHANT (*dropping the jar in astonishment*). A thousand pieces at least! The top of the jar only was laid with olives!

(*He puts the gold into his pockets.*)

To-night, when my wife is asleep, I will fill the jar entirely with fresh olives, for these show they have been disturbed. And I will make up the jar so that no one, except Ali Cogia himself, will know they have been touched.



"A THOUSAND PIECES AT LEAST!"

SCENE II

TIME: *one month later; a moonlight night.*

PLACE: *a small court opening upon a narrow street of Bagdad.*

THE CALIPH.

THE GRAND VIZIER.

FIRST CHILD, *who plays he is the Cauzee.**

SECOND CHILD, *who plays he is the officer.*

THIRD CHILD, *who plays he is Ali Cogia.*

ZEYN, *who plays he is the Merchant.*

TWO BOYS, *who play they are Olive Merchants.*

MANY OTHER CHILDREN, *who look on.*

[*The* CALIPH, *accompanied by his* GRAND VIZIER, *enters the narrow street upon which the court opens. They are in disguise, appearing as merchants.*]

CALIPH. Perhaps we may hear some talk of this affair of Ali Cogia and the merchant, as we go through the city to-night.

VIZIER. It is possible, O Commander of the true Believers! The affair has made a great noise in Bagdad.

* A Mohammedan judge.

CALIPH. Ali Cogia carried the merchant before the Cauzee, I believe.

VIZIER. Yes; he claimed that the merchant had taken from him one thousand pieces of gold.

CALIPH. Proceed; I would know all.

VIZIER. Ali Cogia left with this merchant, so he says, a jar in which he had placed this money. Upon his return, which was but yesterday, he went to the merchant, and, having received the jar, opened it. To his surprise he found that the gold, which he had hidden below a layer of olives, was no longer there.

CALIPH. Ah, that is what Ali Cogia says. What says the merchant?

VIZIER. The merchant made oath before the Cauzee that he did not know there was money in the jar, and so of course could not have taken it.

CALIPH. And the Cauzee dismissed the merchant, I believe.

VIZIER. Yes, Commander of the Faithful, the merchant was acquitted.

CALIPH. This Ali Cogia presented a petition to me to-day, and I promised to hear him to-

morrow. Would that I could know the truth of the matter that I may give a just sentence!

[*They arrive at the court where several* CHILDREN *are playing in the moonlight. The Caliph stops to watch them.*]

FIRST CHILD. Let us play that the Cauzee is trying the Merchant.

SECOND CHILD (*joyfully*). Yes, yes!

THIRD CHILD (*joyfully*). Yes, yes!

ALL CHILDREN (*clapping their hands*). Yes, yes!

CALIPH (*softly to Vizier*). Let us sit on this bench. I would know what these children are playing.

[*They sit, but are not seen by children.*]

FIRST CHILD (*taking his seat with great dignity*). I choose to be the Cauzee!

SECOND CHILD (*taking his place behind the Cauzee*). I choose to be the Officer!

THIRD CHILD. I choose to be Ali Cogia!

CAUZEE. Who chooses to be the Merchant?

[*Long pause; all the Children hang back.*]

CAUZEE. Come, Zeyn, you be the Merchant.

ZEYN. Not I! The part does not please me.

OFFICER. Would you spoil everything, Zeyn?

ZEYN. Oh, well, then, I'll be the Merchant this time.

CAUZEE. Officer, bring in the accused and his accuser.

[*The Officer presents the Merchant and Ali Cogia before the Cauzee.*]

CAUZEE. Ali Cogia, what charge have you to make against this Merchant?

ALI COGIA (*bowing*). Sir, when I journeyed from Bagdad seven years ago, I left with this Merchant a jar. Now, into this jar I had put, with some olives, a thousand pieces of gold. When I opened the jar, I found that it had been entirely filled with olives; the gold had disappeared. I beseech your honor that I may not lose so great a sum of money!

CAUZEE. Merchant, what have you to say to this charge?

MERCHANT. I confess that I had the jar in my house, but Ali Cogia found it exactly as he had left it. Did he ever tell me there was gold in the jar? No. He now demands that I pay him one thousand pieces of gold. I wonder that he does

not ask me for diamonds and pearls instead of gold. I will take my oath that what I say is the truth.

CAUZEE. Not so fast! Before you come to your oath, I should be glad to see the jar of olives.

(*Turning to Ali Cogia.*)

Ali Cogia, have you brought the jar?

ALI COGIA. No; I did not think of that.

CAUZEE. Then go and fetch it.

[*Ali Cogia goes.*]

CAUZEE (*to the Merchant*). You thought the jar contained olives all this time?

MERCHANT. Ali Cogia told me it contained olives at the first. I will take oath that what I say is the truth.

CAUZEE. We are not yet ready for your oath.

[ALI COGIA *enters. He pretends to set a jar before the Cauzee.*]

CAUZEE. Ali Cogia, is this jar the same you left with the Merchant?

ALI COGIA. Sir, it is the same.

CAUZEE. Merchant, do you confess this jar to be the same?

MERCHANT. Sir, it is the same.

CAUZEE. Officer, remove the cover.

(*The Officer pretends to remove the cover.*)

These are fine olives! Let me taste them.

(*Pretending to eat an olive.*)

They are excellent! But I cannot think that olives will keep seven years and be so good. Therefore, Officer, bring in Olive Merchants, and let me hear what is their opinion.

OFFICER (*announcing*). Forward, two Olive Merchants!

[*Two* BOYS *present themselves*].

CAUZEE. Are you Olive Merchants?

BOYS (*bowing*). Sir, we are.

CAUZEE. Tell me how long olives will keep.

FIRST OLIVE MERCHANT. Let us take what care we can, they will hardly be worth anything the third year.

SECOND OLIVE MERCHANT. It is true, for then they will have neither taste nor color.

CAUZEE. If it be so, look into that jar and tell me how long it is since those olives were put into it.

[*Both Merchants pretend to examine and taste the olives.*]

FIRST OLIVE MERCHANT. These olives are new and good.

CAUZEE. You are mistaken. Ali Cogia says he put them into the jar seven years ago.

SECOND OLIVE MERCHANT. Sir, they are of this year's growth. There is not a merchant in Bagdad that will not say the same.

CAUZEE. Merchant, you stand accused. You must return the thousand pieces of gold to Ali Cogia.

MERCHANT. Sir, I protest —

CAUZEE (*interrupting*). Be silent! You are a rogue. Take him to prison, Officer.

[*All the children seize the Merchant and run from the court, laughing and shouting.*]

CALIPH (*rising*). I know now what will be a just trial. I have learned it from the child Cauzee. Do you think I could give a better sentence?

VIZIER. I think not, if the case be as these children played it.

CALIPH. Take care to bid Ali Cogia bring his jar of olives to-morrow. And let two olive merchants attend.

VIZIER. It shall be done, O Commander of true Believers!

CALIPH. If the olives be indeed fresh, then the merchant will receive his punishment and Ali Cogia his thousand pieces of gold.

(*Starting off; stopping.*)

Take notice of this street, and to-morrow present the boy Cauzee with a purse of gold. Tell him it is a token of my admiration of his wisdom and justice.

THE WILD SWANS

SCENE I

TIME: *a long time ago.*

PLACE: *on the seashore.*

ELIZA.

THE GOODY.

[*The* GOODY *is seen walking along the shore.* ELIZA *enters from the forest.*]

GOODY. Bless me! What is the little girl doing in this lonely place? And alone, too!

ELIZA. I seek my eleven brothers.

GOODY. Ah! Then you must be the Princess Eliza!

ELIZA (*sadly*). Yes, Goody.

GOODY. And the eleven brothers you seek are the eleven little princes!

ELIZA. Yes; do you know them?

GOODY. I saw them in school one day. Each prince wore a golden crown on his head, a star on his breast, and a sword by his side.

ELIZA (*nodding*). They studied very hard, just as princes should.

GOODY. They wrote on gold slates with diamond pencils. I myself saw them!

ELIZA. I sat on a little stool of plate-glass. Did you know that?

GOODY. Oh, yes! And I know about your picture-book worth half a kingdom.

ELIZA. We were all so happy then! Our dear mother was alive and sometimes went to school with us. Now all is changed.

GOODY. What has happened?

ELIZA. They have driven us from the palace.

GOODY (*indignantly*). I said so! On the day of that wedding I said so.

ELIZA. Then you know that my father married again?

GOODY. Yes, I know. I wept when I heard our good king had married that wicked queen.

ELIZA. She drove my brothers away, the very day of the wedding feast.

GOODY. And now she has driven you away!

ELIZA (*nodding*). If only I could find my dear brothers!

GOODY. You may hear something about them very soon.

ELIZA (*quickly*). Do you know where they are? Tell me! I pray you tell me!

GOODY (*shaking her head mysteriously*). I cannot say where they are. I only know what they are.

ELIZA. I do not understand —

GOODY. The wicked queen has turned your brothers into wild swans.

ELIZA. Wild swans?

GOODY (*nodding*). I saw them yesterday, at sunrise, flying out over the sea. Each swan wore a gold crown on his head.

ELIZA. The queen could not take their crowns from them!

GOODY. As the swans flew upward, their eleven crowns glittered like eleven suns. My eyes were dazzled. I was obliged to look away. At that moment the swans disappeared.

ELIZA (*sadly to herself*). My poor brothers! I shall never see them again.

GOODY (*suddenly*). Do you see those great blue bluffs to the south?

ELIZA. Yes; the sea is dashing against them.

GOODY. In those bluffs, back from the shore, is a cave. Go at once to that cave and enter.

ELIZA. And what shall I do there, good woman?

GOODY. Perhaps you may learn how to break the spell over your brothers.

ELIZA (*surprised*). How to break the spell?

GOODY. Ask no questions, but go at once to the cave.

ELIZA (*going*). Thank you, good woman. You are very kind to me.

GOODY. Go now, child, and fear nothing.

[*Eliza goes; the Goody disappears.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *a half-hour later.*

PLACE: *the cave.*

ELIZA.

THE FAIRY.

[ELIZA *is seen at entrance of cave. She stops; is afraid to enter.*]

ELIZA. I am afraid to enter! It is so dark —

I know not what is within! It may be the den of some wild animal.

(*Listening.*)

Not a sound do I hear! But wild animals are cunning. They know how to lie as still as death and then to leap quickly.

(*Pause.*)

Well, be it so. I will enter, for I must save my brothers.

[*She enters the cave.* FAIRY *is within the cave, but invisible.*]

FAIRY. You have courage, little Eliza.

ELIZA (*showing relief*). Oh! Are you here, good woman?

FAIRY. Behold!

[*The cave is filled with light; a beautiful Fairy is seen.*]

ELIZA. Ah! I thought it was the Goody.

FAIRY. No matter, dear child. I knew you were to come here.

ELIZA. I was afraid to enter.

FAIRY. But you did enter. Your love for your brothers was greater than your fear.

ELIZA. It was that which gave me courage.

FAIRY. It was a test of your courage. And now I can tell you how to break the spell over your brothers.

ELIZA. I will do whatever you say.

FAIRY. You will suffer greatly.

ELIZA. What matter, if I save my brothers!

FAIRY (*nodding*). Then listen. Do you see the stinging nettles which I hold in my hand?

ELIZA. Yes, dear Fairy.

FAIRY. You must gather great quantities of these.

ELIZA. I noticed many of the same sort growing near this cave.

FAIRY (*shaking head*). You must gather only those that grow in graveyards.

ELIZA. It shall be exactly as you say, dear Fairy.

FAIRY. The nettles will make blisters on your hands.

ELIZA. I will not think of myself; I will think only of my brothers.

FAIRY. Break the nettles into pieces with your hands and feet, and they will become flax. From this flax you must spin and weave eleven coats

with long sleeves. If these eleven coats can be thrown over the eleven swans, the spell will be broken.

ELIZA. It shall be done.

FAIRY. But remember, that from the moment you begin your task, until it is finished, you must not speak. Even though it should occupy years of your life, you must not speak.

ELIZA. I shall remember.

FAIRY. The first word you utter will pierce through the hearts of your brothers like a dagger. Their lives hang upon your tongue. Go now and begin your task.

ELIZA (*going*). I go, dear Fairy.

FAIRY. Remember all I have told you, dear child. Farewell!

[*Eliza goes; the cave becomes dark; the Fairy disappears.*]

SCENE III

TIME: *two days later.*

PLACE: *a distant country; the King's palace.*

THE KING.
HIS WICKED UNCLE.
ELIZA.
GUARDSMEN.
SERVANTS.

[*The* WICKED UNCLE *stands waiting to receive the King. Enter the* KING *with* ELIZA. *She is pale and sad.*]

WICKED UNCLE. Welcome, your Majesty! Welcome home from your hunt! But who is this maiden?

KING. I know not, my Uncle.

WICKED UNCLE. What?

KING. My huntsmen found her in a cave in a far-off country.

WICKED UNCLE. In a cave? Alone?

KING (*nodding*). Alone; spinning coats out of flax.

WICKED UNCLE. This is very strange.

(*To Eliza.*)

Why were you all alone in a cave, and why were you spinning coats?

(*Eliza shakes her head.*)

KING. She is dumb, Uncle. Not a word has she uttered since we found her.

WICKED UNCLE. Why did you bring her with you?

KING. I will make her my queen.

WICKED UNCLE (*angrily*). Your queen?

KING. See how beautiful she is.

WICKED UNCLE (*whispering to King*). She is a witch!

KING. Nonsense! She is as good as she is beautiful.

WICKED UNCLE (*whispering as before*). She has bewitched your heart!

KING. Nonsense, I say! She did not want to leave the cave. She wept bitterly when I put her on my horse.

(*He turns to the servants.*)

Let the music sound! Prepare the wedding feast!

(*He turns to Eliza, who weeps.*)

Do not weep, my beautiful maid.

WICKED UNCLE (*whispering to King*). She is not beautiful. She has bewitched your eyes.

KING. I will not listen to you! Go, bid them ring the church bells.

WICKED UNCLE (*going; speaking aside*). I must poison his heart against her in some way; else I 'll never wear the crown.

[*Wicked Uncle goes.*]

KING (*to Eliza*). Do not weep. You shall be dressed in silks and velvets and I will place a golden crown upon your head.

(*Eliza weeps and wrings her hands.*)

Well, then, I know how to make you smile.

[*The King opens a door into an inner room. Eliza looks in, smiles, and claps her hands for joy.*]

KING. I thought 't would make you happy! 'T is very like your cave — I had it made so.

(*Eliza tries to thank King with her eyes.*)

But no more spinning! Your fingers shall be covered with diamonds instead of blisters.

(*Eliza sighs very sadly.*)

Something troubles you, little queen. If you could only tell me of your grief!

(*Eliza shakes her head sadly.*)

Well, I can at least save you from a life of labor. You shall be most tenderly cared for.

(*Calling.*)

Ho, there, Guardsmen!

(*Enter* GUARDSMEN.)

Guardsmen, behold your queen!

(*Guards kneel before Eliza.*)

Guardsmen, arise and hear my commands.

(*Guards rise.*)

Your queen is never to do any of the work about the castle. Do you hear me, Guardsmen?

GUARDSMEN (*bowing*). We hear, O King!

KING. Not even the spinning or weaving. Do you hear me, Guardsmen?

GUARDSMEN (*bowing*). We hear, O King!

KING. Those are my commands. Now attend us to the banquet-hall.

(*To Eliza, who is weeping.*)

Weep no more, little queen. I wish only your happiness. Come, give me your hand. We go now to the wedding feast.

[*They go out, the Guards attending.*]

SCENE IV

TIME: *two weeks later; sunrise.*

PLACE: *the open just without the town gate.*

THE GOODY.
THE WICKED UNCLE.
THE KING.
ELIZA.
HER ELEVEN BROTHERS.
THE EXECUTIONER.
FIRST CITIZEN.
SECOND CITIZEN.
THIRD CITIZEN.
FOURTH CITIZEN.
GUARDS.

[*Enter crowds of people from the town gate. Enter the* GOODY *from the forest. Enter the* WICKED UNCLE *from the town gate.*]

GOODY (*to Wicked Uncle*). Why these crowds so early, sir?

WICKED UNCLE. Do not call me 'sir.'

GOODY. What shall I say, sir?

WICKED UNCLE. Say, 'Your Highness.'

GOODY. But you are not the King, sir.

WICKED UNCLE. I 'm very near it, old woman.

GOODY. Not so near, sir, as you were, sir. There is the new queen, sir.

WICKED UNCLE. The new queen is about to die.

GOODY (*alarmed*). About to die?

WICKED UNCLE (*nodding*). Aye, because she 's a witch. They 're bringing her out here now.

GOODY. The King permits it?

WICKED UNCLE (*nodding*). He soon found out the truth about her.

GOODY. And what was that?

WICKED UNCLE. Just what I told him the first time I saw her. "She 's a witch," said I, but he would not believe me.

GOODY. What has so changed him?

WICKED UNCLE. 'T was I who saw her slip forth from the castle one midnight. I followed her; straight to the graveyard she went.

GOODY. To the graveyard?

WICKED UNCLE (*nodding*). In she went — I following. I saw her gather the stinging nettles that grow there.

GOODY. But they would blister her hands. Did she not cry out?

WICKED UNCLE. Not a sound did she utter! That would prove her a witch, were there nothing more.

GOODY. Ah, there is something more, then?

WICKED UNCLE (*nodding; mysteriously*). I followed her back to the castle; through the marble halls and up to the little cave room. I saw her break up the nettles. Then I saw her spin and weave this flax into a magic coat.

GOODY. Bless me! A magic coat?

WICKED UNCLE (*nodding*). There were ten of them hanging from the ceiling.

GOODY. Of course you told the King?

WICKED UNCLE. Just as soon as I could waken him, but he would not believe me. He said there was but one coat when they brought her here, and that there could be but one now.

GOODY. She worked at night, then, while the castle slept.

WICKED UNCLE. True queens do not work — nay, can't be made to work. Every one knows that.

GOODY. But how did the King find out the truth?

WICKED UNCLE. I persuaded him to watch with me the next night. Just at midnight the queen came out. We followed her to the graveyard. "That is enough," said his Majesty, "she is a witch and must die."

[*The* CITIZENS *rush to the gates.*]

CITIZENS (*calling*). See the witch!

GOODY. Is she coming?

WICKED UNCLE (*looking*). Yes, she is just within the gate. She rides in an old cart drawn by an old horse — quite good enough for a witch.

[*Enter the* KING *with servants and* GUARDS. *Behind them is the cart. In the cart sits* ELIZA. *She is spinning and weaving, never once looking up.*]

GOODY. How pale she is! Bless me! She is spinning and weaving.

WICKED UNCLE. It is the eleventh coat and it will be the last.

GOODY. How she hurries to finish it!

[*The cart stops.*]

KING (*to Eliza*). Once again I ask you, — Are you a witch?

(*Eliza shakes her head.*)

Then give up the coats. They are of no use to any one.

[*Eliza again shakes her head.*]

WICKED UNCLE. That proves her a witch! Else, she would give up the coats.

KING (*to Eliza*). Once more, — Will you not give them up?

[*Eliza shakes her head. The King turns away. He is very sad; his eyes are filled with tears.*]

FIRST CITIZEN (*calling*). See the witch!

SECOND CITIZEN (*calling*). See her magic coats!

THIRD CITIZEN (*calling*). Let us tear them to pieces!

FOURTH CITIZEN (*calling*). At them, Citizens! Tear them to shreds!

GOODY (*looking up; speaking aside*). Here come the Wild Swans! Now we shall see what we shall see!

[ELEVEN WILD SWANS *descend from the sky and alight on the cart. Each wears a golden crown.*]

FIRST CITIZEN. Back, Citizens, back! Wild Swans have alighted on the cart!

FOURTH CITIZEN. What do we care for Wild Swans? Forward, Citizens!

FIRST CITIZEN. Back, I say! The Swans are beating us with their strong wings!

SECOND CITIZEN. Back! back, Citizens! We dare not approach the cart!

GOODY (*calling to the people*). The Swans have come to save the queen! 'T is a sign from heaven that she is innocent!

WICKED UNCLE (*angrily*). Be silent, old woman!

(*He turns to the Executioner.*)

Executioner, do your duty!

EXECUTIONER. Out of the cart, witch!

(*Eliza shakes her head; takes up coats from floor of cart. The Executioner turns to the Wicked Uncle.*)

She will not come!

WICKED UNCLE. Seize her — I command you!

FIRST CITIZEN. Seize her! Seize her!

GOODY. Look, Citizens, look! She is spreading the coats over the Swans!

[*Eliza throws the eleven coats over the eleven Swans, who turn to eleven little princes, but the youngest has a swan's wing instead of an arm, for the last sleeve was not finished.*]

FIRST CITIZEN. Do you see that, Citizens? They are princes! She has saved them!

SECOND CITIZEN. She is no witch!

THIRD CITIZEN. She is an angel from heaven!

THE ELEVEN BROTHERS. Dear sister, you have saved us!

ELIZA. Now I may speak — I am innocent!

ELDEST BROTHER (*to King*). Yes, she is innocent!

NINTH BROTHER. How you have suffered for us, dear Eliza!

CITIZENS (*to Eliza*). Forgive us!

KING (*to Eliza*). Forgive me! I did not understand.

WICKED UNCLE (*annoyed, but trying to conceal it*). And I did not understand, I —

KING (*sternly*). Be silent!

(*To Guards.*)

Seize him!

(*The Guards seize the Wicked Uncle.*)

Take him to the mountains where the stinging nettles grow.

WICKED UNCLE. Mercy! Mercy!

KING. You had no mercy on brave little Eliza! Now you shall gather nettles for the rest of your life. Away with him, Guardsmen!

(*The Guards take the Wicked Uncle away. The King turns to his servants.*)

Let the music sound! Bring forth the queen's golden crown!

(*To Eliza.*)

My whole kingdom shall do you honor! This land has never seen a more beautiful thing than your love for your brothers.

GOODY (*whispering aside*). Ring, church bells! Ring of yourselves!

[*All the church bells are heard ringing.*]

CITIZENS. Hear the church bells! They ring of themselves!

KING. They ring for this sweet queen whose heart is as good as her face is beautiful. Come, Citizens! Away now to the castle! Away to the banquet-hall!

THE TWO COUNTRYMEN

SCENE I

TIME: *evening.*

PLACE: *a large city; a quiet corner with a high wall back.*

FIRST COUNTRYMAN.
SECOND COUNTRYMAN.
FIRST CITY WAG.
SECOND CITY WAG.
MERCHANT.

[*Great crowds of people are seen in the streets. The* TWO COUNTRYMEN *have just arrived. They find a quiet corner where they place their blankets and baskets of gourds which they carry.*]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. I fear something most dreadful must have happened in that street. See what crowds of people pass that way!

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Perhaps there is a fire. And yet —

[*He stops, showing he is puzzled.*]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*anxiously*). What troubles thee?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Look thou into that other street! It, too, is full of people, and yet none are gone from here.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Some awful accident hath called them from all parts of the city. We must find out what it may be.

[*A* MERCHANT *passes.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*to Merchant*). I pray thee stop, citizen.

(*The Merchant stops.*)

Canst thou tell us what dreadful thing hath befallen this city?

MERCHANT. What do you mean?

[TWO CITY WAGS *pass; they stop to listen.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Whither do they go, these vast multitudes? What dreadful thing go they to see?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Perhaps they flee from some monster just come out of the sea?

MERCHANT. It is ever thus — always the great crowds surging through the streets.

[*The Merchant goes.*]

SECOND WAG (*to Countrymen, winking aside at First Wag*). This is your first visit to a city, I take it?

BOTH COUNTRYMEN (*bowing*). It is, good sirs.

FIRST WAG (*winking aside at Second Wag*). You know what happens to strangers in our city, of course?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*anxiously*). No, good sir.

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*anxiously*). Pray tell us what it may be.

FIRST WAG. 'T is said they become so dazed by the noise of the city and the rush of such countless numbers, they forget who they are.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Eh? Forget who they are?

FIRST WAG (*nodding*). Aye.

(*He winks aside at Second Wag.*)

You have heard of this, dear friend?

SECOND WAG (*winking aside*). To be sure; 't is quite common.

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Forget their own faces?

SECOND WAG. Aye, — their faces. At least,

they are not certain as to whose faces theirs may be.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Then we dare not leave this corner!

FIRST WAG. I would not advise it.

SECOND WAG. It would be most unsafe, — at least for to-night.

FIRST WAG. Of course there is this danger, — when you awake in the morning you may not know whether you are yourselves.

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Would that I had never left my farm!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Would that I had never left my wife!

SECOND WAG. Do not despair; there is a way out of your troubles.

BOTH COUNTRYMEN. Tell us, we pray thee!

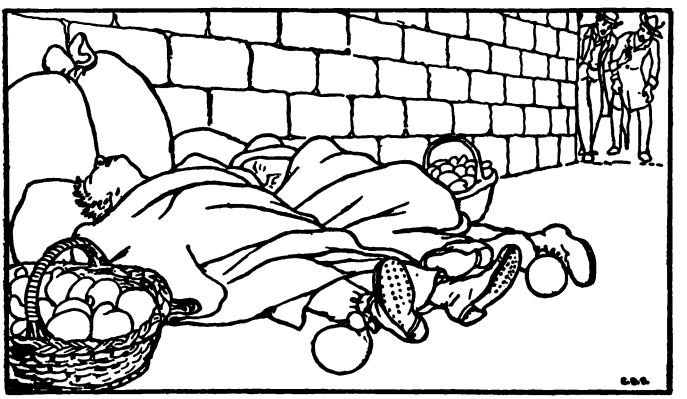
SECOND WAG. Each of you must take a gourd from his basket there and tie it around his ankle. Then, in the morning, when you awake, you will each know that it is yourself and none other.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*to Second Countryman, joyfully*). Dost thou hear? By our gourds we shall know!

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*joyfully*). I hear! Thanks and yet again more thanks to thee, good sir!

[*The Wags turn to go.*]

FIRST WAG. May you know yourselves in the morning for what you truly are!



[*They go, laughing aside. Each Countryman ties a gourd around his ankle, wraps his blanket round him, and lies down. They sleep. Pause.*

Enter the WAGS *softly, each carrying a small flag. They remove the gourds from Countrymen's ankles and hide them under their blankets. They then tie the flags around Countrymen's ankles and go, greatly pleased with their joke.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *the next morning.*
PLACE: *same as Scene I.*

FIRST COUNTRYMAN.
SECOND COUNTRYMAN.
FIRST CITY WAG.
SECOND CITY WAG.

[*The* WAGS *are seen peeping around the corner.*]

FIRST WAG (*softly*). They are sound asleep.

SECOND WAG (*softly*). Then come.

[*They enter and throw the two baskets of gourds over the wall. They then retire around the corner, peeping as before.*]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*waking ; shaking Second Countryman*). Wake up! Wake up!

[*Each yawns; stretches; throws off his blanket; arises.*]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*remembering*). Ah, the gourds!

[*Each looks at his ankle, then at the other's ankle.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. How's this!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Did we not tie gourds around our ankles?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*nodding*). Why, surely we did.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*looking about*). Did we not have two baskets of gourds with us?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*nodding*). Surely; there in the corner.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*holding up foot to which flag is tied*). Is this a gourd or is it not a gourd?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Of a surety it is a flag.

(*Holding up his foot with flag.*)

And if this be not a gourd, keep thy silence.

[*The First Countryman stares at the flag, placing his finger on his closed lips.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Then it hath indeed happened!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. What hath happened?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. The dreadful thing foretold by the citizens. I am not I! Thou art not thou!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*trembling with fear*). How can that be?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. I know not. I only know that it is.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*weeping*). I cannot think I am not myself!

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*weeping*). Thou needst must think it, whether thou wouldst or no.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Dost thou indeed think thou art some other person?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. If I were myself, would not the gourd still be around my ankle?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Then who art thou? And who am I?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Alas! I know not.

[*Enter the* WAGS.]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*joyfully*). Here come those who will know whether we are ourselves!

[*The Wags pretend not to know the Countrymen who are bowing before them. They pass on.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Stop, good sirs!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. A word with thee!

[*The Wags stop.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Dost thou not know us?

FIRST WAG. I have not that pleasure.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Thou didst talk with us but yester-eve!

SECOND WAG. Some mistake, I fear, my good man.

[*The Wags start off.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*weeping*). Wait! I pray thee, wait!

(*The Wags stop.*)

Canst thou not tell us who we are?

FIRST WAG. Do you not know yourselves?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Alas! we are not ourselves.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Thou wouldst know us were we as we were once.

SECOND WAG. Perhaps those flags will solve the riddle.

FIRST WAG. True enough; let us look at them.

[*The Countrymen remove flags and hand them to Wags, who look at them intently.*]

SECOND WAG (*mysteriously*). Can it be?

FIRST WAG. It is! It is!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Eh?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Eh?

SECOND WAG (*to Countrymen*). Your pardon! I do crave your pardon!

FIRST WAG (*taking a ring from his finger; turning to Second Countryman*). Please to accept this ring. I shall then know I am forgiven for not recognizing you at first.

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*accepting ring; putting it on the first finger of his right hand*). Why, yes, I forgive thee.

SECOND WAG (*to First Countryman, taking off his gold chain*). Please to accept this chain. By that I shall know I too am forgiven.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*accepting chain; putting it on*). Thou art forgiven. Now tell me what great person I have become.

SECOND WAG (*gravely*). Jest with us no more!

FIRST WAG. We go now to announce your arrival to the Lord Mayor.

SECOND WAG. Presently, we will return. Await us here.

[*They go, laughing aside.*]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Dost thou know, I have

always felt that I was really a great person. Hast thou not always noticed something unusual about me?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. I cannot say that I have. There is, however, certainly something wonderful about me. I have noticed it for a long time. Hast thou not felt it when in my company?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. I have not.

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*indignantly*). Thou hast not?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Never! thou silly goose!

[*The Second Countryman snatches First Countryman's chain and throws it over the wall.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Mind how thou callest me names, thou booby!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*tearing off Second Countryman's ring and throwing it over the wall*). Silly goose!

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. I will now depart for my home. I do not desire thy company.

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. I likewise will return, and likewise I wish to journey alone.

[*They take up their blankets and discover the gourds.*]

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Eh?

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Eh?

FIRST COUNTRYMAN. Let us tie them around our ankles. We may then discover whether we are ourselves.

[*They tie the gourds around their ankles.*]

SECOND COUNTRYMAN (*joyfully*). I am myself!

FIRST COUNTRYMAN (*joyfully*). And I am myself!

SECOND COUNTRYMAN. Come, let us journey back together.

[*They go out. Pause. Enter the* WAGS. *They remain at entrance, not knowing Countrymen have gone.*]

FIRST WAG (*whispering*). Do you think the musicians should follow them?

SECOND WAG (*whispering*). No, they should follow the music. What a joke it is!

[*They look around and discover that the Countrymen have gone.*]

FIRST WAG (*sadly*). My ring!

SECOND WAG (*sadly*). My chain!

THE MAN AND THE ALLIGATOR

SCENE I

TIME: *the morning after the cyclone.*
PLACE: *The Man's garden.*

THE MAN.
THE ALLIGATOR.

[*The* MAN *enters the garden carrying his big stick and small net. The garden has been almost destroyed by the* ALLIGATOR, *who still wallows among the beds.*]

MAN. There should be enough apples on the ground to fill my net. 'T was a fierce storm last night!

(*He looks about; sees the Alligator; shows indignation.*)

Thou — within my garden!

ALLIGATOR (*meekly*). Be not angry with me, O master! By accident I —

MAN (*indignantly*). Accident! Thou hast wallowed among my flowers by accident, hast thou?

ALLIGATOR. It is true; not of my own will came I hither.

MAN (*more indignantly*). Thou hast broken my fruit trees by accident, I suppose!

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). It was not of my own intentions, I assure you. I —

MAN (*interrupting*). Thou art this moment crushing my strawberry plants beneath thy great body! I 've a mind to beat thee with my big stick!

ALLIGATOR. Do not beat me, O master! The cyclone is at fault.

MAN (*surprised*). The cyclone?

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). Aye, it blew me here from the river last night.

MAN. Ha, ha! A likely story!

ALLIGATOR. I speak the truth. A great waterspout lifted me out of the river. Then a fierce wind caught me and blew me about as if I were a feather. Finally, I was dropped here within thy garden.

MAN (*only half convinced*). Well, there's no cyclone to blow thee back. Wilt thou be good enough to walk thyself out?

ALLIGATOR. Alas! I can scarcely move me. I fear some of my ribs are broken.

MAN. Nonsense! Out with thee!

ALLIGATOR. But see how the wind has crippled me! It has even blown some of my claws loose —

MAN (*interrupting*). I am sorry for thee, but thou canst not remain here.

ALLIGATOR. I will go now, if thou wilt help me.

MAN (*surprised*). *I* help thee?

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). I will be so grateful to thee!

MAN. Oh, I know how grateful thou canst be! The other animals have told me that!

ALLIGATOR. What say they?

MAN. That thou art the most cruel of all the animals — that thou never dost any one a favor —

ALLIGATOR (*interrupting*). Nonsense! No one could be more grateful for favors than I! I'll prove it to thee!

MAN. Prove it? How?

ALLIGATOR. If thou wilt help me to the river, I'll show thee where to find the biggest fish.

MAN. Well — that's something —

ALLIGATOR. And when thou wouldst cross the river, I'll carry thee.

MAN. Of a surety, that's good of thee! Perhaps, after all, thou art not so black as thou art painted. I'll help thee this time.

ALLIGATOR. Thanks to thee, master. I will never forget thy kindness; I will always be thy friend.

MAN. Why, I am glad to help thee. Now how am I to get thee to the river?

ALLIGATOR. Carry me, please, O master!

MAN. What! carry thee?

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). I'll get into thy net.

MAN. Thou get into my small net!

ALLIGATOR. Only hold thy net open!

MAN (*holding his net open*). I tell thee, thou canst never get in!

ALLIGATOR. See how I fold my arms! My legs go under — so! Now I roll myself up and up and up! And now I am in — all in!

MAN. Well, seeing is believing!

ALLIGATOR. Please to tie up thy net, master, that I may not fall out.

MAN (*tying net*). 'T is done!

(*Throwing net over shoulder.*)

Thou art heavy!

ALLIGATOR. I know, it will be hard work for thee, but some day thou wilt see how grateful I am.

[*The Man goes, carrying the Alligator over his shoulder and his big stick in his hand.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *the afternoon of the same day.*

PLACE: *the river bank.*

THE MAN.

THE ALLIGATOR.

THE WOLF.

THE LEOPARD.

THE RABBIT.

[*Enter the* MAN *carrying the* ALLIGATOR *over his shoulder. He stops, throws down his big stick and places the Alligator carefully on the bank.*]

MAN. Our journey is ended, brother.

(*Untying net.*)

Now then, roll thyself out!

(*The Alligator comes out of the net.*)

Well, how dost thou feel now?

ALLIGATOR. Much better, thanks to thee; but I'm very hungry and I find I'm still quite weak. I pray thee help me down the bank, O master!

MAN (*helping the Alligator down the bank*). Now, then, thou art close to the water.

[*He turns to go.*]

ALLIGATOR. Just a little farther, please. I am still so weak!

MAN. Then I'll help thee into the water.

(*He helps the Alligator into the water.*)

Now thou art in; and now I will depart.

[*He turns to go.*]

ALLIGATOR (*seizing the Man's leg*). Not yet!

MAN. Let go of my leg!

ALLIGATOR. Why?

MAN (*indignantly*). Why! Why!

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). Why and wherefore?

MAN. Thou art hurting me!

ALLIGATOR. It will soon be over.

MAN. What dost thou mean?

ALLIGATOR. What I have just spoken.

MAN. Why dost thou look at me so?

ALLIGATOR (*slowly*). Because — I — mean — to — eat — thee.

MAN. Eat me!

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). Eat thee.

MAN. Me?

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). Thee.

MAN. Thou didst promise to be my friend.

ALLIGATOR. I was only fooling thee.

MAN. But I helped thee out of trouble.

ALLIGATOR. No matter — I mean to eat thee.

MAN. Is that the way to repay a favor — by doing a wrong?

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). That's the way of all the animals.

MAN. Thou art surely mistaken — not all the animals —

ALLIGATOR (*interrupting*). There's not one of them remembers a favor or a friend when hungry.

MAN. I cannot think that! Suppose we ask the first animal that comes to drink?

ALLIGATOR. Ask any of them — I know what they will say.

[*Enter the* WOLF. *He comes down the bank to drink.*]

MAN. Wolf, I would question thee.

WOLF (*gruffly*). Well?

MAN. How dost thou repay the one who doth thee a favor?

WOLF (*gruffly, as before*). By doing him a wrong.

[*The Wolf drinks and goes.*]

ALLIGATOR. Ha, ha, ha! Just what I said! Now I shall eat thee forthwith!

MAN. I can't believe that every animal would so answer.

ALLIGATOR. I don't intend waiting for thee to find out.

MAN. I pray thee wait till the next animal comes to drink!

ALLIGATOR (*impatiently*). Have I not told thee of my hunger?

MAN. Listen! Some animal comes through the forest now.

[*Enter the* LEOPARD. *He comes down to drink.*]

Leopard, I would question thee.

LEOPARD (*curtly*). Well?

MAN. How dost thou repay the one who doth thee a favor?

LEOPARD (*curtly, as before*). By doing him a wrong.

[*He drinks and goes.*]

ALLIGATOR. Ha, ha, ha! It is just as I said! I will now eat thee forthwith!

MAN. I pray thee —

ALLIGATOR (*interrupting*). It is now all over with thee!

MAN (*calling*). Help! help!

[*Enter the* RABBIT.]

RABBIT. A word with thee, Ally dear!

ALLIGATOR. I shall be busy for a few minutes, Brother Rabbit.

RABBIT (*going down bank quickly*). Who is this thou art about to dine upon? Why, 't is the Man!

MAN. How dost thou repay a favor, Brother Rabbit?

RABBIT. Why dost thou ask?

MAN. I found the Alligator in my garden this morning. He had destroyed my plants, my fruits, and —

ALLIGATOR (*interrupting*). I was blown in by the cyclone last night.

MAN. He said he had been hurt and begged me to help him to the river. He promised me his friendship if I would do so.

ALLIGATOR. Ha, ha, ha! I told him I'd show him where to find the biggest fish.

RABBIT. And now thou wilt not?

ALLIGATOR. But I will. He'll find it after he is *inside* of me. Ha, ha!

RABBIT. Ha, ha! A good joke!

ALLIGATOR. I told him I'd carry him across the river. I did n't explain he'd go *inside*. Ha, ha!

RABBIT. What a joker thou art, Ally dear!

(*He turns to the Man.*)

But how didst thou get him here?

MAN. I carried him in this small net.

RABBIT (*looking surprised*). Thou art trying to fool me!

MAN. No, Brother Rabbit, it is quite true.

ALLIGATOR (*nodding*). Yes, it is true.

RABBIT. But, Ally, try as thou mightst, thou couldst not so much as get thy head into that net.

"HELP! HELP!"

ALLIGATOR. But I tell thee I did!

RABBIT. Ha, ha, ha! That's too funny!

ALLIGATOR (*angrily*). I do not like thy manners, young man.

RABBIT. But it's such a joke! Ho, ho, ho!

ALLIGATOR. Cease thy laughing or I shall eat thee some day!

RABBIT. I laugh because I must laugh! Ha, ha, ho, ho!

ALLIGATOR. Thou wilt not believe it, eh?

RABBIT. Well, not unless I see it.

MAN. We can prove it to thee, Brother Rabbit.

RABBIT. Oh, that's good too! Ha, ha, ho!

ALLIGATOR. Dost thou think we cannot?

RABBIT. Of course thou canst not! If thou couldst, thou wouldst.

ALLIGATOR. And we will! Get thy net ready, Man.

MAN. But how? Thou art holding my leg.

ALLIGATOR (*freeing the Man; turning to the Rabbit*). We'll show thee just how it was done, young man.

RABBIT. Seeing is believing.

[*The Man brings his net; opens it.*]

ALLIGATOR. See! I put my legs under — so! Then I fold my arms — so! Now I roll myself up and up and up. And now I am in — all in!

RABBIT. As I live — thou art! Well, seeing is believing. But how couldst thou remain within the net? It is quite open.

ALLIGATOR. Tie it up, Man. Show him exactly how we did it.

MAN (*tying net*). I tied it tight — like this, Brother Rabbit.

RABBIT. Is it quite tight?

ALLIGATOR. Let him try the knot, Man.

RABBIT (*trying knot*). Most truly, it is tight.

(*Turning to the Alligator.*)

Thou dost look as if thou couldst not move, Ally dear.

ALLIGATOR. Of a surety — I cannot.

RABBIT. Well, Brother Man, now that thou hast him, don't be foolish enough to let him go. Get thy big stick and beat him to death.

ALLIGATOR (*surprised*). Eh?

MAN (*not heeding the Alligator*). That is just what I will do, that I will! Thanks to thee for helping me, Brother Rabbit.

ALLIGATOR. Have pity!

RABBIT (*not heeding the Alligator*). No thanks are necessary, Brother Man. I have n't forgotten the good turnips thou didst give me last winter when the ground was covered with snow. Some of us know how to return favor for favor.

THE SONG IN THE HEART

SCENE I

TIME: *once upon a time.*

PLACE: *in the house of the poor Spinner.*

THE DAME.

ISABEL, *her daughter.*

FLAT-FOOT, HANGING-LIP, BROAD-THUMB } *the Three Great-Aunts.*

THE QUEEN.

[*The living-room in the Dame's cottage is seen. The* DAME *and the* THREE GREAT-AUNTS *are spinning.* ISABEL *sits at her spinning-wheel, but has stopped work and looks out of the open door.*]

DAME (*sharply*). Isabel! You gaze without!

ISABEL (*nodding*). Upon those great trees, mother. How beautiful they are! How like sentinels they stand at our door guarding us!

FLAT-FOOT (*growling*). What nonsense! You'd better be spinning.

ISABEL (*not heeding*). Mother, see you that old oak! See how proudly it lifts its head up into the sky! 'T is the king of the forest!

HANGING-LIP (*growling*). I never heard such foolish talk!

ISABEL (*not heeding*). Mother, a song has come to me, — 't is a song to the beautiful trees. Let me stop to write it down, while my heart is full of it.

BROAD-THUMB (*to the Dame*). Do not permit it, sister! She should be working. She can scarcely spin at all.

DAME (*showing much feeling*). Isabel! Isabel! Not a maid in the village thinks of anything but spinning.

ISABEL. Mother, let me stop! Soon the song will leave me. I may ne'er hear it again.

FLAT-FOOT (*to the Dame*). Sister, she will bring you to shame.

HANGING-LIP. Already the village folk laugh at her!

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding*). Aye! They call her "the Dreamer." I myself have heard them.

ISABEL. I care not what they call me!

DAME (*raising her voice*). Nay, but I care. I'll not have you different from other folk.

HANGING-LIP. *We* were never seen gazing upon trees!

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding*). Aye! *We* never heard songs within *us!*

FLAT-FOOT (*nodding*). Aye! *We* think only of our work!

ISABEL. What's your work may not be mine!

DAME (*decidedly*). There's no other work for a maid than spinning.

ISABEL (*sighing*). I like it not! Though every other maid in all the world did love to spin, I'd say the same — I like it not!

DAME (*to Flat-foot; showing alarm*). Sister, close the door, that none without may hear such words.

[*Flat-foot rises, but is too late. The* QUEEN *enters from the street.*]

QUEEN (*showing displeasure*). How now! What's all this noise? I heard it from the street!

[*All are frightened; Isabel weeps.*]

DAME (*bowing*). 'T will not happen again, your Majesty.

QUEEN (*looking at Isabel*). Have they beaten you, my child?

ISABEL (*still sobbing*). N — o —, your Majesty.

QUEEN (*to the Dame*). Tell me why your daughter weeps.

DAME (*more frightened*). She weeps because — because —

[*She stops in confusion.*]

QUEEN. Well — well?

DAME. Because — because — I will not let her spin.

QUEEN (*showing surprise*). Because you will not let her spin?

DAME (*nodding*). Yes, your Majesty.

QUEEN. Why, this is most strange.

DAME (*nodding*). Would I but let her, she'd spin from morn till night, and from then on till morn again.

QUEEN. I see how it can be so. There's nothing I like better than spinning.

DAME. She weeps whenever I make her leave off.

QUEEN. 'T is because she loves it! I am never more pleased than when the wheels are whirring.

DAME. But stop she must, for to-day at least. There is no more flax.

QUEEN. I have rooms full of flax. Let your daughter come to my castle. She may spin there as much as she pleases.

DAME (*now, most frightened*). I — I fear she would be a trouble to you.

QUEEN. Why, no! In fact, I am so pleased with your daughter's industry I will have my son marry her.

DAME (*so frightened she can scarcely breathe*). O your Majesty —

QUEEN (*interrupting*). But first she must spin all my flax. There are three rooms full of it — from top to bottom.

ISABEL (*showing alarm*). Three rooms full!

QUEEN (*nodding*). Aye, my dear, and when you have spun it all, you shall become a princess!

(*Turning to the Dame.*)

Bring your daughter to my castle to-morrow.

DAME (*bowing*). Yes, your Majesty.

QUEEN (*going*). To-morrow, mind you.

DAME (*bowing*). Yes, your Majesty.

[*All bow to the Queen, who goes.*]

ISABEL. Mother, how could you tell the Queen I love to spin?

DAME. Think you I'd let the truth be known? I'd not shame myself so!

ISABEL. I could not spin three rooms of flax in three hundred years.

DAME. Alas! alas! What shall we do?

FLAT-FOOT (*to Hanging-lip and Broad-thumb*). Sisters, let us speak together.

[*The three Great-Aunts whisper together for a moment.*]

HANGING-LIP. Isabel, we will help you —

FLAT-FOOT (*interrupting*). On one condition!

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding*). Aye, — on a certain condition!

ISABEL. What do you mean?

HANGING-LIP. We'll spin the flax for you —

FLAT-FOOT (*interrupting*). On one condition.

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding*). Aye, — on a certain condition!

DAME. You speak in riddles, sisters.

HANGING-LIP. 'T is this — if Isabel will invite us to her wedding, we'll spin the flax.

FLAT-FOOT. That's the condition.

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding*). Aye, — that's the certain condition.

ISABEL. 'T will be deceiving the Queen and the Prince, both.

DAME. There 's no other way to mend things. Go now! Since you are so soon to be a princess, I 'll give you leave to write down your song.

ISABEL (*sadly*). The song is no longer in my heart.

DAME. 'T is well. Now listen — you must never let the Prince know about your songs. He'd send you from the castle.

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding*). Besides, 't would bring great shame upon us, for we are a family of spinners.

FLAT-FOOT (*nodding*). Aye, aye!

HANGING-LIP (*nodding*). Aye, aye!

SCENE II

TIME: *one week later.*

PLACE: *the Queen's castle.*

THE QUEEN.

THE PRINCE.

ISABEL.

THE THREE GREAT-AUNTS.

[*The* THREE GREAT-AUNTS *are working at the last heap of flax in the third room.* ISABEL *watches them anxiously.*]

ISABEL. Think you to finish before the Queen comes?

FLAT-FOOT (*nodding as she treads the wheel*). Aye, if treading the wheel will do it!

HANGING-LIP (*nodding, as she moistens the thread over her lip*). Aye, if moistening the thread will do it!

BROAD-THUMB (*nodding, as she presses the thread with her thumb*). Aye, if pressing the thread will do it!

ISABEL. 'T is to-day she brings the Prince.

FLAT-FOOT. Another minute and we'll have finished.

ISABEL. Should they come suddenly, you know where to hide — behind those curtains there.

THREE GREAT-AUNTS (*nodding*). Aye, we know!

[*A noise is heard in the distance.*]

ISABEL. Some one comes!

(*She runs to the door, opens it, and looks out.*)

The Prince comes down the stairs! Quick, aunts, quick!

FLAT-FOOT (*rising*). Well, 't is finished!

ISABEL (*looking into hall*). Now comes the Queen! To the curtains, quick!

[*The three Great-Aunts hide behind the curtains, just as the* QUEEN *and the* PRINCE *enter.*]

QUEEN. Well, have you finished?

ISABEL (*pointing to a pile of thread*). There's the last of it, your Majesty.

QUEEN (*looking at thread*). Spun in the finest style, too! Prince, but a week ago these rooms were filled with flax. Now look at them.

PRINCE (*looking about*). Empty, as if flax had never been here. 'T is wonderful how one maid could do so much!

QUEEN. 'T is most wonderful!

PRINCE. The wedding shall take place to-day. Isabel, come now with us.

ISABEL (*thoughtfully*). No, no! I cannot!

PRINCE. You cannot?

QUEEN. You cannot! What do you mean?

ISABEL (*to the Queen*). Let me go home, your Majesty!

QUEEN. Go home!

ISABEL. I am not worthy —

PRINCE (*interrupting*). Nonsense! That you are poor is nothing to me.

QUEEN (*going*). Come, the wedding bells shall ring at once!

ISABEL. Your Majesty — I — I — did not spin the flax.

QUEEN. What! You did not spin the flax?

PRINCE. What is this?

ISABEL. I deceived you — I can scarcely spin at all.

QUEEN. But this pile of thread here —

ISABEL. 'T was spun by another.

PRINCE. Another?

ISABEL. Yes, Prince.

QUEEN. You shall marry that one then, my son!

(*To Isabel.*)

As for you, return to your hovel!

(*Isabel turns to go.*)

Stay!

(*Isabel stops.*)

Who is the wonderful spinner? Tell us where to find her.

ISABEL. Here, your Majesty.

QUEEN. Hidden away, I suppose?

ISABEL (*nodding*). Yes, your Highness, behind those curtains.

QUEEN. Go, my son, and draw the curtains. You shall be the first to look upon your bride.

[*The Prince draws the curtains and sees the three Great-Aunts, who sit in a row. They smile and smile upon the Prince, who stands looking at them in astonishment.*]

FLAT-FOOT. You'd never be sorry to take me for your bride, my lord.

PRINCE (*not heeding*). Why is your foot so flat?

FLAT-FOOT. From treading the wheel! From treading the wheel!

HANGING-LIP. You'd never be sorry to take me for your bride, my lord.

PRINCE (*not heeding*). Why is your lip so long?

HANGING-LIP. From moistening the thread! From moistening the thread!

BROAD-THUMB. You'd never be sorry to take me for your bride, my lord.

PRINCE (*not heeding*). Why is your thumb so broad?

BROAD-THUMB. From pressing the thread! From pressing the thread!

[*The Prince turns to Isabel.*]

FLAT-FOOT (*quickly*). Isabel does naught but gaze and gaze, on flowers and trees and running brooks. Ha, ha, ha!

PRINCE. Is this true, Isabel?

ISABEL (*timidly*). Yes, Prince.

HANGING-LIP. She says these flowers and trees and running brooks do sing her songs. Ha, ha, ha!

PRINCE. Is this true, Isabel?

ISABEL (*as before*). Yes, Prince.

BROAD-THUMB. And she begs leave to write down these songs. Ha, ha, ha!

THE PRINCE SEES THE THREE GREAT-AUNTS

PRINCE. Is this true, Isabel?

ISABEL (*hanging head*). Yes, Prince.

PRINCE. Isabel, hang not your head. I'll give you time to write your songs.

QUEEN. My son —

PRINCE (*interrupting*). Nay, nay, mother! The songs please me better than the flat-foot and the hanging-lip and the broad-thumb of the spinners. Come, Isabel, you shall be my princess! You shall sing me your songs! You shall teach me how to gaze upon flowers and trees and running brooks, for these things have ever been dear to my heart. Come, Isabel, come!

THE EMPEROR'S TEST

SCENE I

TIME: *one spring; noon.*

PLACE: *an army camp on the banks of a large creek. A village is near by. To the south is a great forest.*

THE EMPEROR.

THE GENERAL.

THE CAPTAIN.

FIRST AIDE.

SECOND AIDE.

THE MAYOR'S WIFE AND SON.

THE RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE AND SON.

THE POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE AND HER SON, PIERRE.

[*An ante-room in the Emperor's tent is seen. Great curtains separate this room from the Emperor's room back. An* AIDE *waits in the ante-room. Enter the* GENERAL *from the Emperor's room.*]

GENERAL (*to the Aide*). Have any yet come from the village? The Emperor would know.

AIDE. Yes, General. They wait without.

GENERAL. Bid them enter.

AIDE (*crossing; speaking to those without*). You will please enter.

[*Enter the* MAYOR'S WIFE *and* SON; *the* RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE *and* SON.]

GENERAL. You have come to see the Emperor?

THE LADIES. General, we have.

GENERAL. His Majesty wishes you to leave your sons here in camp until evening.

MAYOR'S WIFE. General, could you not tell us the Emperor's plans?

GENERAL. Yes, madam. The Emperor must march southward where the enemy is in camp. He wishes a guide who can lead him safely through this great forest.

RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE. We were told the Emperor would greatly honor the lad he chooses.

GENERAL. 'T is true, madam. The lad chosen will be made an aide.

MAYOR'S WIFE. I thought only princes were chosen for the Emperor's aides.

GENERAL. They have always been princes. This is a great opportunity for the lads of this village.

MAYOR'S WIFE. But how will the Emperor make a choice?

GENERAL. A test will be given every boy who comes. This test will prove his fitness to be guide.

[*Enter an* AIDE *from Emperor's room.*]

AIDE. General, the Emperor would see you.

[*The General bows to the ladies and leaves.*]

AIDE (*turning to the ladies*). The Emperor will receive you presently.

[*Aide goes. Enter the* POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE *and* SON.]

POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE (*timidly*). I heard the Emperor wanted a guide.

MAYOR'S WIFE. The Emperor only wants the boys of the best families, madam.

[*Enter the* EMPEROR, GENERAL, *and* CAPTAIN; *they remain back; are not seen by the ladies.*]

POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE (*sighing*). I suppose that is true, but Pierre is a smart boy. If the Emperor could only see him —

RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE (*interrupting*). The Emperor wants a boy with proud manners such as our boys have.

EMPEROR (*indignantly*). Fiddlesticks!

THE LADIES (*bowing*). Your Highness!

EMPEROR. Fiddlesticks and candles, I say!

POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE. I am sorry, your Majesty. I did n't know how it was. Come, Pierre.

[*She turns to go.*]

EMPEROR. Remain. Pierre shall have the test with the others. Ladies, you shall know whom I have chosen when the test is finished. I bid you good-day.

[*The ladies bow and go.*]

EMPEROR (*turning to the boys*). My lads, go through the forest southward, till you come to the river. You may then return. Captain, see that guards go with them. My lads, you must not speak the one to the other until I have again seen you. I must have your word on that. Do you promise?

BOYS. Sire, we promise.

EMPEROR. 'T is well. Captain, they are now in your charge. General, a word with you.

[*The Emperor and General go into Emperor's room. The Captain leads the boys from the tent.*]

SCENE II

TIME: *two hours later.*

PLACE: *the Emperor's tent; the Emperor's room.*

THE EMPEROR.
FIRST AIDE.
SECOND AIDE.
LUDWIG.

[*The* EMPEROR *is seen sitting at a table looking at maps. Enter an* AIDE. *He salutes.*]

EMPEROR. Well?

AIDE. The prisoner has returned, sire.

EMPEROR. What prisoner?

AIDE. The one sent out for the test, sire.

EMPEROR. Who was sent?

AIDE. Ludwig, the prisoner who has been ill for so long.

EMPEROR. Ah, yes; bid him enter.

(*Aide goes; he reënters with* LUDWIG, *who wears an old, torn army cloak over his uniform. He salutes.*)

I notice you are a bit lame, Ludwig.

LUDWIG. Yes, sire; in my left leg. My dog was hit at the same time.

EMPEROR. Does your dog go to battle with you?

LUDWIG. If he can slip into the ranks, sire. He always goes where I go, sire.

EMPEROR. Then he went with you to-day, of course?

LUDWIG. Yes, sire.

EMPEROR. You are sure the boys did n't see you?

LUDWIG. No one saw me. I kept a sharp look-out. When I came to a clear space I went to one side, hiding behind trees, to look ahead. Then I ran across.

EMPEROR. That must have tired you, Ludwig. You're not quite well yet.

LUDWIG. I found I could n't leap the streams; I had to climb down the banks and wade them.

EMPEROR. You rested by the way, did n't you?

LUDWIG. Yes, sire, and once I stopped to pick berries.

EMPEROR. You made the return trip by boat up the creek?

LUDWIG. Yes, sire.

EMPEROR. That is all.

[*The Aide and Ludwig go. The Emperor claps his hands. Enter* SECOND AIDE. *He salutes.*]

EMPEROR (*to Aide*). Have the lads returned?

AIDE. No, sire.

EMPEROR. Do you know when the Captain expects them?

AIDE. In about half an hour, sire.

EMPEROR. Bid their mothers return at that time. I wish them to be present at the test.

AIDE. Yes, sire.

[*He salutes and goes.*]

EMPEROR (*slowly*). Let me see — a lame man; a lame dog; running footprints across open spaces; wading streams instead of leaping them; stopping to pick berries — Why, the story reads itself!

(*He sits at table; takes up maps.*)

Well, we shall see what we shall see!

SCENE III

TIME: *a half hour later.*

PLACE: *the Emperor's tent; the ante-room.*

THE EMPEROR.

THE GENERAL.

THE CAPTAIN.

AN AIDE.

THE MAYOR'S WIFE AND SON.

THE RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE AND SON.

THE POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE AND SON, PIERRE.

[*The* LADIES *wait in the lower end of ante-room. Back is a great armchair.*]

MAYOR'S WIFE. I cannot think why the boys were sent into the forest!

RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE. Nor I! It seems to me the Emperor should have asked them what they could do. Now, my boy dances so prettily!

MAYOR'S WIFE. I was certain he would ask them to ride. Now, my boy rides so well — just like a prince!

RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE. Well, he will no doubt ask them all these things upon their return.

(*She turns to Pierre's mother.*)

You see, madam, how little chance your boy has. I am sure he cannot dance?

POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE (*sadly*). No, madam.

MAYOR'S WIFE. I am certain he does not ride?

POOR WOODCUTTER'S WIFE (*sighing*). No, madam.

[*Enter an* AIDE; *crosses to Emperor's room; announces at curtains.*]

AIDE. The boys have returned, sire!

[*Enter the* CAPTAIN *with the* BOYS. *Enter the* GENERAL *from Emperor's room.*]

GENERAL (*announcing*). The Emperor!

[*Enter the* EMPEROR; *all bow.*]

EMPEROR (*sitting in armchair*). I will now give the test. Captain, bring up the first boy.

[*The Captain brings up the* RICH MERCHANT'S SON.]

EMPEROR. Well, my lad, what did you see in the forest?

RICH MERCHANT'S SON. Many, many trees, sire.

EMPEROR. You saw nothing but trees?

RICH MERCHANT'S SON. That was all, sire — just trees.

EMPEROR. I shall not want you; you may go.

RICH MERCHANT'S WIFE. Oh, your Majesty, if you could only see him dance!

EMPEROR. Candles and cheese! Do I want a dancing guide? Captain, bring up the next one.

[*The Captain brings up the* MAYOR'S SON.]

EMPEROR. Well, my lad, what did you see in the forest?

MAYOR'S SON. I saw trees and bushes, sire.

EMPEROR. Nothing more?

MAYOR'S SON. No, sire.

EMPEROR. I shall not want you; you may go.

MAYOR'S WIFE. Oh, your Majesty, if you could only see him ride! Just like a prince, sire!

EMPEROR. Fiddlesticks! Captain, the last boy there.

[*The Captain brings up* PIERRE].

EMPEROR. Well, my lad, what did you see in the forest?

PIERRE. I saw that a man had passed southward just before us, sire.

EMPEROR. How did you know that? Did you see him?

PIERRE. No, sire, I saw his footprints. He was lame in the left leg.

EMPEROR. How did you learn that?

PIERRE. The footprints were deeper on the right side. His dog was lame also.

EMPEROR. He had a dog?

PIERRE. Yes, sire; a lame dog I'm sure, because one of his tracks was always faint or missing.

EMPEROR. Did you trace this man and dog by their footprints?

PIERRE. Yes, sire, to the river. There were traces of them in the grass, in the mud, in the dust, on rocks, and in still water. I am certain they had passed but a short time before — not more than a half hour.

EMPEROR. How could you tell that?

PIERRE. The grass had not yet straightened up. The tracks in the mud had not yet filled with water. The prints in the dust were still clear although a wind was blowing.

EMPEROR. Good! But how did you know they

had but just passed through still water and over rocks?

PIERRE. The water had not yet settled, and the rocks were still damp.

EMPEROR. Good! Very good!

PIERRE. Sire, I fear this man is one of the enemy!

EMPEROR. Indeed! What proof have you of that?

PIERRE. This, sire.

(*Handing a small piece of cloth to Emperor.*)

'T is the color of the enemy's uniform.

EMPEROR. It is, my lad. How came you by it?

PIERRE. I found it on a thorn-bush. It was torn from his cloak, sire.

EMPEROR. And why from his cloak?

PIERRE. The thorn-bush was at least three feet from the man's line of travel. The wind blew the cloak about.

EMPEROR (*handing the cloth to an aide; whispering to him*). Take this to Ludwig.

(*The Aide goes.*)

Well, Pierre, do you think we should be in fear of this enemy?

PIERRE. I do not know, sire. I only know that he has a good disposition.

EMPEROR (*surprised*). A good disposition? How do you know that?

PIERRE. The dog was always near him. When the man stopped to rest, the dog lay down at his feet.

EMPEROR. But he may have held the dog there, my lad.

PIERRE. Not while he was picking berries, sire.

EMPEROR. So our enemy picked berries, did he?

PIERRE. Yes, sire, the dog lying by the bushes all the while.

EMPEROR. Do you think we could capture this man?

PIERRE. Yes, sire, for he was very tired.

EMPEROR. How do you know that?

PIERRE. He climbed down the banks of every small stream. I should have leaped them.

EMPEROR. You think it would be an easy matter, then, to follow and capture him?

PIERRE. Not easy, sire, for he was always on the lookout.

EMPEROR. How do you know that?

PIERRE. Whenever he reached a clear space, he went to one side, hiding behind trees to look ahead. Then he ran across the open.

EMPEROR. Your proof of this, my lad?

PIERRE. His footprints in every clear space showed only the balls of the feet.

EMPEROR. Good! You followed him only to the river.

PIERRE. Those were the orders, sire. Had I gone on, I could have overtaken him by evening.

EMPEROR. That you could not, my lad, for the man is now here, in camp. He returned by boat. Ladies, the test is over.

(*He turns to Pierre's mother.*)

Madam, your son shall be my guide. I am proud to have a boy of such keen sight and quick thought in my kingdom. And 't is much to be the mother of such a lad. I salute you, madam! With greatest respect I salute you!

[*He bows to the happy woman with great courtesy.*]

EMPEROR (*turning to the ladies*). Ladies, I bid you farewell.

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS

SCENE I

TIME: *one morning;* 1484.

PLACE: *a street in front of King John's palace, Lisbon, Portugal. Gates to courtyard of palace in background.*

CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.	KING JOHN.
SCHOOLMASTER.	COURTIERS.
CARLOS.	JESTER.
ROQUE.*	RIVERRA,‡ A SEA-CAPTAIN.
PANCHO.†	PORTER.

BOYS, HOSTLERS, SERVANTS.

[*Enter* CARLOS, ROQUE *and* PANCHO. *They carry their school-books. A noise is heard in courtyard.*]

ROQUE (*stopping; listening*). There's stirring in the King's courtyard!

[*He runs to closed gates; peeps through a crack.*]

CARLOS. Come, Roque, we shall be late to school.

* Pronounced *Rō'kā.*

† Pronounced *Pān'chō* (*ch* as in *ch*urch.)

‡ Pronounced *Rē-ver'rā.*

ROQUE (*throwing down books*). Come, look! They are laying the red carpets in the court!

PANCHO (*throwing down books; peeping*). 'T is for the King they lay them!

CARLOS. Come, the master will be angry.

ROQUE. But the King will soon be coming!

PANCHO. Let's wait and see him, Carlos!

CARLOS. Not I! I know how the master flogs! Yesterday I came late to school.

PANCHO. Why were you late?

CARLOS. I stopped to watch the crazy Italian, Columbus.

[*He starts off; the others follow.*]

ROQUE. I saw him once!

PANCHO. I wish I might see him!

CARLOS. There he comes now! (*Calling.*) *Loco!* Loco!*

ROQUE. Aye, there he is! (*Calling.*) *Loco! Loco!*

PANCHO (*calling*). *Loco! Loco!*

[*Enter* COLUMBUS, *dignified and gentle. A crowd of* BOYS *follow.*]

ALL BOYS. *Loco! Loco! Loco! Loco!*

* Pronounced *lō'kō*; Spanish for *crazy*.

[*Enter* SCHOOLMASTER, *carrying a switch.*]

MASTER (*flourishing switch*). To school with you! To school now!

[*Boys run off in alarm.*]

MASTER (*turning angrily upon Columbus*). You were teaching them your foolish notions, sir!

COLUMBUS (*smiling*). I'd like the chance to do so, master.

MASTER. Ah, then you *have* been at it! I saw them all about you!

COLUMBUS. I taught them nothing, master, — this time.

MASTER. 'T is well for you, sir, that you did not. The world is flat, sir, flat! Do you not know that, sir?

COLUMBUS. I was so taught —

MASTER. How do you dare, then, to say the world is round?

COLUMBUS. Much study and common sense, dear master, have made me dare.

MASTER. The lessons taught your fathers are good enough for you, sir.

COLUMBUS. That cannot be, dear master. How, then, could the world move on?

MASTER. Move on? Hear him talk! Do you think, sir, that an elephant carries this flat world on his back and walks about with it? Ha, ha!

[*Gates are opened;* PORTER *is seen.*]

MASTER (*going*). Go tell the King this world is round! Ha, ha! Go tell the King!

[*Schoolmaster goes.*]

PORTER (*seeing Columbus; aside*). Ah, 't is the crazy Italian!

COLUMBUS. Porter, I seek the King!

PORTER. Do you think he'll listen to your silly talk? O, I've heard of you! Away!

COLUMBUS. Come, let me in!

PORTER. Away! Away with you, *loco!*

[*Enter from gates, the* JESTER *in cap and bells,* HOSTLERS *and* SERVANTS.]

JESTER. Who's away? Who's crazy?

PORTER. The Italian there! He who says this world is round!

JESTER. Round? How now? Round, say you?

PORTER (*nodding; laughing*). With people on the other side!

JESTER. A-standing on their heads — so!

[*Jester stands on his head; all laugh. Enter a* COURTIER.]

COURTIER. The King comes!

[*Enter* KING JOHN *and many* COURTIERS.]

JESTER (*capering about Columbus*). Ha, ha, ha, ha!

KING. What's this, Jester?

JESTER. Here's he, sire, who says this world is round!

[*He capers about Columbus; all laugh.*]

KING. I've heard of your notions, Columbus. So you think there's land to be discovered, do you?

COLUMBUS. Yes, your Majesty, I'm sure of it.

JESTER. With people a-standing on their heads — so!

[*He stands on his head; all laugh.*]

KING. Silence! Columbus, I've a mind to listen, and give you ships and money. Have you maps and charts to prove your plans?

COLUMBUS (*taking maps from cloak*). Yes, sire.

KING. Wait, then, till I have spoken with my Courtiers.

[*Columbus bows, retires, and unrolls maps.* CAPTAIN RIVERRA *crosses to Columbus; talks with him aside.*]

KING (*speaking softly to Courtiers*). You know, my Courtiers, that should there be new lands, great glory will be given the discoverer of them.

FIRST COURTIER. Aye, sire, 't will bring him great honor.

SECOND COURTIER. And riches.

KING. 'T is I, and I alone, who should have the honor and the riches!

FIRST COURTIER. Aye, sire!

SECOND COURTIER. Aye, sire!

THIRD COURTIER. But nothing can be done without the Italian's maps and charts. No one but he knows the route over the unknown seas.

KING. Well, we must have his maps and charts.

FIRST COURTIER. He'll not sell them, sire. You may depend on that.

KING. And we'll not buy them. Go, bid my fool take them.

(*Courtiers showing surprise.*)

Go, I say, and see to it!

[*Courtiers talk aside with Jester.*]

RIVERRA (*to Columbus*). I wish you well, sir, for I believe that what you say is true.

COLUMBUS. I'm glad to hear you say that, Captain.

RIVERRA. My ship is in the harbor now, and I must go. But I wish you well, Columbus, I wish you well.

[*Columbus, throwing his maps on the stone bench near gates, takes Riverra's hands in his. The Jester creeps up, takes maps, runs into the court with them, and disappears.*]

COLUMBUS (*with feeling*). I thank you, Captain — so few believe in me —

KING. Come now within, Columbus; I'll look at your maps and charts.

[*Riverra goes.*]

COLUMBUS (*turning to take up maps*). Why, how is this! My maps were here but just a moment ago!

KING. Who saw his maps?

(*Pause.*)

The Courtiers are silent, sir.

COLUMBUS. I laid them there, sire!

KING. Then there they should be.

COLUMBUS. Some one has taken them — 't is a joke —

KING (*interrupting*). My Courtiers do not play jokes in my presence.

COLUMBUS. Those maps and charts are precious to me, sire!

KING. Come, now, I'm not so sure you ever had maps or charts.

COLUMBUS. Your Majesty!

KING. Well, produce them.

COLUMBUS. But, sire, —

KING (*interrupting*). I'll not hear excuses! Your maps, sir, — at once, sir!

COLUMBUS. I'll make other maps and charts —

KING. Away with you!

COLUMBUS. Your Majesty —

KING. Away, I say! And come to us no more with tales of unknown lands.

[*Enter* JESTER *from gates.*]

JESTER. With people a-walking on their heads — so!

[*Jester stands on his head; all laugh. Columbus goes, showing bitter disappointment.*]

SCENE II

TIME: 1492.

PLACE: *Spain. Court of King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella.*

KING FERDINAND. CAPTAIN RIVERRA.
QUEEN ISABELLA. WISE MEN.
CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS. COURTIERS AND LADIES.
A MONK, FATHER-CONFESSOR TO THE QUEEN.
MESSENGER.

[*Many* COURTIERS *and* LADIES *are seen in audience-room of palace; a throne is in the background. Enter the* FIRST COURTIER.]

FIRST COURTIER. The King and Queen!

[*Enter* KING FERDINAND *and* QUEEN ISABELLA, *followed by* COURTIERS, LADIES *and the* WISE MEN. *All bow as the King and Queen cross to throne and sit. Enter the* MONK; *he advances to throne and bows.*]

KING. Speak, good Father.

MONK. I pray your Majesties to see one Christopher Columbus.

KING (*inquiringly*). Columbus?

MONK. The Italian who thinks he can find a short route to the Indies, sire.

KING (*nodding*). Ah, I remember. You brought his plans to us some time ago, good Father.

QUEEN (*nodding*). Let us see him to-day, sire.

KING (*to First Courtier*). Admit this Christopher Columbus.

(*Courtier admits* COLUMBUS. *He kneels before the King.*)

Rise, Columbus, and tell us what you seek.

COLUMBUS (*rising*). Ships, sire, to prove the plans which I did send your Majesties; plans for sailing in the unknown seas.

QUEEN. They seemed to me most wise and sensible.

COLUMBUS (*with joy*). Ah, your Majesty believes with me?

KING (*hastily*). I'd have our Wise Men speak. Unfold your maps before them, sir.

[*Columbus crosses to Wise Men and unfolds a map before them. They look at it, shake their heads and laugh.*]

COLUMBUS (*with dignity*). I propose to sail by this route to find that eastern land.

FIRST WISE MAN. Ha, ha! I never heard anything so absurd! He 'd sail west to find the east! Ha, ha!

SECOND WISE MAN (*pointing to map*). The edge of the world is out there in those strange waters! And you are willing to fall off with your ships into space, sir?

COLUMBUS. I'm sure the water continues —

THIRD WISE MAN (*interrupting*). How could there be land beyond? 'T would be under us, and the trees would have to grow their roots in the air.

[*Wise Men nod wisely.*]

SECOND WISE MAN. And the rain must needs fall upward there!

ALL WISE MEN (*nodding wisely*). Aye! Aye!

QUEEN. I've heard you did lay your plans before King John of Portugal?

COLUMBUS. I did, your Majesty.

KING. That was bad for you, Columbus. King John sent ships, but they soon returned.

(*Turning to* CAPTAIN RIVERRA.)

Was not that the way of it, Captain? You sailed with them, I believe?

RIVERRA. Yes, sire. But the failure came because the sailors were afraid and refused to go on.

(*To Columbus.*)

You were thus avenged for the theft of your maps, sir.

QUEEN. Would you sail again with this man as your leader, Captain?

RIVERRA. I would, your Majesty! I believe not in the monsters and the edge.

QUEEN. Nor I! Let 's provide the ships, sire.

KING. Our people would not like it — they 'd grumble. And so 't would be bad for us.

[*Enter* MESSENGER *in great haste; kneels before King and Queen.*]

KING. What news do you bring? Speak!

MESSENGER. The Turks have captured the Spanish merchant ships!

KING. Our ships bound for the Indies?

MESSENGER. Yes, your Majesty.

KING. Alas! Alas!

QUEEN. The merchants and the sailors — did the Turks spare them?

MESSENGER. Not one, your Majesty!

QUEEN. Alas, such loss of life! And 't is not the first time! Not a month that does not bring us the same sad news!

FIRST WISE MAN (*to Monk*). You must give our people consolation, Father.

MONK. 'T is not so much consolation they need, as another passage to the Indies; one far away from Turkey and the cruel Turks.

QUEEN. You are right, Father. Speak on.

MONK. To find such a passage is the chief purpose of Christopher Columbus. That is the hope that has given him courage when half the world called him *fool.*

QUEEN. Sire, we must find ships and money!

KING. We dare not tax the people more —

QUEEN. Then I'll help you, Columbus! I'll pledge my own jewels to raise the funds.

COLUMBUS (*joyfully*). Your Majesty!

QUEEN. 'T is for the safety of our merchants! 'T is for the glory of Spain!

COLUMBUS (*kneeling before Queen; kissing her robe*). My Queen!

SCENE III

TIME: *five months later; evening.*
PLACE: *on board the Santa Maria.*

ADMIRAL CHRISTOPHER COLUMBUS.
CAPTAIN PINZON.*
SAILORS.

[*The* SAILORS *are seen sitting on deck in a group. They are gloomy and dejected.*]

FIRST SAILOR. 'T is a sea of darkness!

SECOND SAILOR. Last night I heard the angry sea-gods!

THIRD SAILOR (*nodding*). Aye, I heard them!

FOURTH SAILOR. What were they crying?

SECOND SAILOR. Angry words to us for coming into their own waters.

FIRST SAILOR. 'T is the Italian Columbus the sea-gods should destroy!

ALL SAILORS. Aye! Aye!

SECOND SAILOR. We'll never see Spain again!

THIRD SAILOR. We should compel him to return!

ALL SAILORS. Aye! Aye!

* Pronounced *Pin'thōn.*

[*Enter* COLUMBUS *with* CAPTAIN PINZON. *They cross to bow of ship. The Captain glances uneasily at the sailors.*]

CAPTAIN. Admiral, I must tell you frankly, the sailors are dissatisfied.

COLUMBUS. I am sorry to hear that, Captain.

CAPTAIN. What shall we do, sir?

COLUMBUS. Do? Why, sail on!

CAPTAIN. I'll see to it, sir!

[*Captain goes.*]

FIRST SAILOR (*crossing*). Admiral, the men have chosen me to speak for them.

COLUMBUS. What do they wish?

FIRST SAILOR. To return to Spain, sir!

COLUMBUS. Tell them we may see land any day now.

FIRST SAILOR (*shaking head*). They 'll no longer listen to that!

COLUMBUS. Then tell them that I mean to sail on.

FIRST SAILOR (*starting*). Sail on?

COLUMBUS. Yes; to sail on and on. Go tell them that.

[*Sailor goes. Enter* CAPTAIN.]

CAPTAIN. Admiral, the sailors below show signs of mutiny!

COLUMBUS (*alarmed*). Mutiny?

CAPTAIN (*nodding*). The same as these on deck. Only look at them!

[*The Sailors talk together excitedly and gesticulate wildly.*]

COLUMBUS. Ah, if I could only give them my courage!

CAPTAIN. I fear for your life, Admiral, if the order is not given to return.

COLUMBUS. I cannot give it, Captain.

[*The Sailors on deck are joined by others from below. They rush down upon Columbus.*]

FIRST SAILOR (*angrily*). You must take us back to Spain, sir!

SECOND SAILOR. We'll not go farther, sir!

ALL SAILORS. Aye! Aye!

COLUMBUS. I'm sure we will soon find land —

SAILORS (*interrupting; angrily*). Hear him! Hear him!

COLUMBUS. To the one who first sees land, the Queen has promised money —

FIRST SAILOR (*interrupting*). Money! to feed to the sea-monster!

SECOND SAILOR (*threateningly*). Will you turn back?

COLUMBUS (*with determination*). No!

CAPTAIN. Now, men, back to your duties.

THIRD SAILOR. Alas! we'll never see our homes again!

FOURTH SAILOR. Nor our friends!

FIRST SAILOR. We are lost, men!

SECOND SAILOR. What shall we do?

ALL SAILORS. What shall we do? What shall we do?

[*As their anger turns to despair, Columbus is touched.*]

COLUMBUS. Listen, men,—I make you this promise: if we do not see land within three days, we will return to Spain.

CAPTAIN. There, now,—that's a fair promise! Go now to your duties!

COLUMBUS. And let every man watch for land as he has never watched before!

SAILORS (*pleased*). Aye, aye, sir!

[*Sailors cross to a distant part of deck.*]

COLUMBUS (*sadly*). Alas for my plans and my hopes, if these three days bring not land!

[*He talks aside with the Captain.*]

FIRST SAILOR. We were too easily won over, men.

SECOND SAILOR (*nodding*). Fearful things may happen to us in these three days!

THIRD SAILOR. Suppose we reach the edge to-morrow!

FOURTH SAILOR. Suppose the sea-monster should come for us to-night!

ALL SAILORS. Aye! Aye!

FIRST SAILOR (*cautiously*). Come closer, men! There's something I would say to you!

[*Sailors close about him; Captain goes.*]

FIRST SAILOR (*pointing to Columbus, who stands in bow looking at the stars*). Why should he not fall into the seas to-night?

SECOND SAILOR. What! You mean —

FIRST SAILOR. I mean he *must* fall into the seas to-night. Are you with me, men?

ALL SAILORS. Aye! Aye!

FIRST SAILOR (*cautiously*). 'T is my plan to push him over as he stands there looking at the stars.

FOURTH SAILOR. Why not creep upon him now?

FIRST SAILOR. Are you willing, men, to have the deed done now?

ALL SAILORS. Yes! Yes!

FIRST SAILOR (*to Second and Third Sailors*). Come with me, you two! We 'll creep up on his left.

[*They creep upon Columbus, who is seen to suddenly bend forward, looking eagerly into the distance.*]

COLUMBUS. Land! Land!

[*Sailors stop; enter the* CAPTAIN.]

CAPTAIN. Did you say land, sir?

COLUMBUS. Land, Captain, land! Come, Sailors, come! Land! Land!

SAILORS (*looking; joyfully*). Land! Land!

COLUMBUS (*lifting his arms*). Now Heaven be praised!

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